DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Essentially Christian in character? Ethos in integrated schools

Wardlow, Michael

Award date:
2013

Awarding institution:
Queen's University Belfast

Essentially Christian in character? Ethos in integrated schools

by

Michael Wardlow CFCIPD. FCII. B.D. MTh.

A dissertation submitted as a part of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD) in the School of Education, Queen's University Belfast

January 2013

ABSTRACT

Integrated schools are still relatively new within the educational landscape of Northern Ireland, with the oldest school, Lagan College, recently celebrating its 30th anniversary. In the main governing document of the movement, the 1989 Statement of Principles, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education claimed that integrated education was '*essentially Christian in character*', and offered a Christian rather than a secular approach to education.

Despite the fact that significant research exists exploring the nature of integrated education, there is scant research focusing on what might be termed an '*integrated ethos*' and within that context, there is no research exploring the nature of the Christian ethos within integrated schools.

In order to explore this under-researched area, the author carried out two case studies, in two integrated primary schools, which considered how teachers, ancillary staff and board members understood the nature of an integrated ethos, with a particular focus on the Christian element of that ethos.

Overall, the research findings showed that an integrated ethos was school specific and drawn from a set of core values, including those held in common by the main world faiths. It contained a number of core elements and was inclusive and multi-denominational. Although theoretically stewarded by the board, its development was delegated to the principal, who was the key former and driver of that ethos. It was intentional and impacted on all elements of school life. It was capable of being changed and in turn could change and impact on the school culture. There was no significant difference in how the two schools types understood and practiced their individual ethos.

The research suggested a number of areas for further exploration, including the role of boards in stewarding ethos and whether integrated schools should remain '*essentially Christian in character*', in an increasingly multi-cultural society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to all who contributed to the completion of this study.

I am indebted to my two supervisors, Professor Joanne Hughes and Dr. Caitlin Donnelly for the oversight.

To the participants in the study, who offered me access to their school, their time and their lives in a spirit of generosity, I offer my gratitude and sincere appreciation. In the interests of confidentiality and anonymity I cannot name them, but their honesty has enabled this research to take place in a very positive context.

On the administrative side, I extend my thanks to Lesley, Kelly, Abi and Nathan for all their help.

On a more personal note, I want to express my grateful thanks to my family, particularly my wife Karen, for all their understanding, endurance and patience during the course of the study.

Table of Contents.

Chapter 1. Introduction.

General introduction.

The subject of the research, 'Essentially Christian in Character?: Ethos in Integrated Schools' arose out questions raised during 35 years working in the broad area of 'community relations' in Northern Ireland, the last 15 years of which were connected with integrated schools, that is, those which purposefully educate together children from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds (Education Reform Order, 1989). Community relations, in Northern Ireland terms, relates to an area of work aimed at facilitating greater cross-community contact and deeper relationships between the two main religious traditions, Protestant and Catholic, thereby increasing mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity (Central Community Relations Unit, 2011).

As previous Chief Executive Officer of the organisation responsible for assisting parents develop integrated schools, the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), the author had considerable exposure to a wide variety of schools and had been involved in a number of discussions around integration in schools, from the background to the movement (ACT, 1976) to a more focused debate on the nature of integrated ethos in a multi-cultural society.

Over that time it became clear that the concept of '*ethos*' was a difficult one to tie down and although it was discussed and debated with passion on many occasions and was to become the major focus of the new sectoral support bodies to be established under the Education Skills Authority, it remained an elusive concept. This lack of consensus was evidenced amongst integrated schools, specifically highlighted during a year- long consultation to develop a revised statement of principles for the movement, which was to include a new ethos statement. During that period, one of the more contentious issues was whether integrated schools should remain '*essentially Christian in character*' in an increasingly multi-cultural society.

It was the author's engagement with this debate which helped focus the research questions for this dissertation.

Key issues.

Schools do not exist in a vacuum, but reflect within their ethos, political, religious and cultural aspirations (McEwen, 1999, p.7). In Northern Ireland, the development of the current system has been influenced by a variety of underlying political, historical and policy contexts (McGrath, 2000) which have, since 1831, delivered a largely separate, Christian educational provision in Northern Ireland (Farren, 1995, p.247), with various manifestations of ethos (Scarlett, 1999; Catholic Bishops, 2001a and 2008).

This separate provision remained the default until April 1974, when a local Minister for Education, Basil McIvor, introduced a shared-school plan, aimed at supporting parents who wanted to have children from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds educated together (Dunn, 1990, p.85). Despite the legislation, the first integrated school, as the new provision was termed, was not established until 1981 (Donnelly, 2004, p.3), but since that time the movement has grown and now provides 60 schools attracting over 20,000 pupils (NICIE, 2009). The author's involvement with integrated education covered a period of rapid growth when the school numbers grew from 24 in 1995 to 60 in 2009.

For the author, one of the key issues surrounded the nature of an integrated school ethos and how it was stewarded and experienced in everyday school life. Questions concerning the role of Christianity in the movement (Chadwick, 1994) has formed a core focus of debate since the early days of the integrated sector (Bardon 2009, p.42), culminating in its inclusion as a central principle in the core document for the movement, the NICIE Statement of Principles (NICIE, 1989). Since that time, questions continued to be raised around the role that Christianity should play within understanding and practicing that ethos.

Some research indicated that differences existed between controlled-integrated schools (those which transformed to integrated status) and grant-maintained integrated (new-build) schools (Marriott, 2001), in how those schools approached integration. This raised an additional question as to whether the Christian element of the integrated ethos was interpreted differentially in those two school types.

Formulation of research questions.

This initial interest followed a brief literature review which discovered that, although some research existed examining the nature of school ethos, limited work had taken place within the specific area of an integrated ethos, with no recent research focusing

on the relevance of its Christian characteristics. As this was an area of interest which the author wished to pursue, a series of research questions were developed which, it was hoped, would inform an examination of this under-researched area of work.

As the key focus involved the nature of an integrated ethos, including the Christian component and how it was understood and applied in the day-to-day life of integrated schools, the questions needed to be focused on integrated schools. Following an iterative process the following two research questions emerged, so the purpose of the research was to,

a) explore how key stakeholders in integrated schools understand an integrated ethos and its application in practice,

b) explore whether there is an aspect of this integrated ethos which might be described as a 'Christian ethos' and, if so, how that is reflected in school life, including whether or not it is perceived and applied differently between controlled and grant-maintained integrated schools.

Research methods.

The research design was directed by the two questions which concerned the interpretation of an integrated ethos, specifically the Christian focus, in the lived experience of integrated schools. It was important that the methodology was able to uncover the thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973, p.137), which '*create statements that produce for the readers the feeling they have experienced or could experience ... in the study*' (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p.129) relating to day-to-day school life, which the researcher needed in order to address the questions. This suggested that a qualitative approach (Cohen et al, 2003, p.139), rather than a quantitative one would be the more appropriate medium.

The research was specifically interested in developing an understanding of how ethos was understood, experienced and mediated in specific, mature school environments. To this end, because there was less concern with issues of generality and cause and effect, than to uncover the attitudes of school communities to ethos and their understanding of how it is experienced in school environments, the investigation required capturing in-depth, rich data, relating to social interaction over a period of time.

Moreover, the purpose of the research was to '*portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations though accessible accounts*' (Cohen et al, 2003, p.79) a case study was considered to be an appropriate approach. The research questions included whether or not the two types of integrated schools interpreted the Christian ethos differentially, so two urban primary schools, one controlled and one grant-maintained integrated school, were chosen as the subjects for the case studies. Primary schools were selected as it is within those schools that manifestations of the Christian ethos, such as sacramental preparation, were arguably most observable.

Considering the sources of evidence, following Yin (2009, p.101), it was decided to examine documents including archive records where appropriate, carry out site visits, including examination of physical artefacts, direct observation and semi-structured interviews with key members. Given the researcher's prior involvement with integrated schools, participant observation was omitted (Burgess, 2000, pp.78ff) as it was considered that his presence could impact on the event and its outcome. It was decided to limit observation to the school plant, an assembly and a board meeting. These multiple sources of data collection allowed for '*converging lines of enquiry*' to be followed (ibid, p.113) thus strengthening the conclusions through triangulation (Silverman, 2004, p.99; Cresswell and Miller, 2000, p.126).

The main method of data collection was through a series of interviews, as they are useful to allow access to areas not capable of observation (Burgess, 2000, p.107). One-to-one interviews (Clough and Nutbrown, 2006, p.102) were selected as the data collection method for the key school leaders as this allowed for an iterative dialogue to develop between the researcher and for probing questions to be used. Focus groups were chosen for the other staff and governors in order to ensure a wide discussion and range of views from all key stakeholders was captured (Fowler, 1995, p.107).

Semi-structured questionnaires (Cohen et al, 2003, p.146), were preferred as the method of eliciting discussion during the interviews in both case studies. This allowed for the two main research questions to be discussed through using a number of open-ended questions (ibid, p.271).

Structure of Dissertation.

The dissertation is presented in seven chapters. The first chapter attempts to explain the rationale and set the context for the research.

In chapter two, the history of the Northern Ireland education system is outlined, focusing on the significance of ethos in that process and highlighting the emergence of the movement for planned, integrated education.

In chapter three, a literature review is carried out which demonstrates that although substantive research exists relating to the nature of ethos in schools, and that some limited research has been carried out in integrated schools specifically, to date no research has addressed the specific area of what constitutes an integrated ethos, with a particular focus on the Christian ethos.

Chapter four deals with the methodology, profiling the methods used and offering a rationale for their choices.

Chapters five and six highlight how the schools understood and interpreted integrated ethos in their day-to-day school practice during two case studies carried out during the 2009-2010 school year.

Chapter seven details the key research findings and raises some questions which will inform future research in this area.

Chapter 2. School ethos in Northern Ireland.

General Introduction.

McEwen (1999) concluded that when the two major blocks of schools, constituting the majority of the educational provision in Northern Ireland were compared and contrasted, the main differentiating feature was that of ethos (p.121). The research indicated that in the Catholic sector, '*all subjects are organised within a comprehensive religious atmosphere*' whereas '*the state schools are, de jure, non-denominational but de-facto Protestant and Unionist in outlook*' (ibid). In addition, it is generally accepted that,

> *'Protestants and Roman Catholics rest the evidence of Christianity on totally different grounds. The former establish the divine authority of the bible independently of the church, proving its authenticity and inspiration and the right of private judgement to interpret its contents, entirely without her aid: whereas the latter receive the sacred scriptures from the church, which they acknowledge as the sole depository and the infallible interpreter of revelation.'* (Akenson, 1973, p 71)

Integrated schools were initiated by parents who expressed a desire to offer an alternative to what was perceived to have become a segregated system of education (Linehan, 2003), wherein the two main school types manifested their own distinctive ethos. Accordingly, this chapter will consider the educational context in which integrated schools emerged, identifying how ethos was represented in the two pre-existing school types, Catholic maintained and Controlled (de-facto Protestant) and will outline the development of ethos in integrated schools within this context. It will highlight the fact that despite being established as institutions which were '*essentially Christian in character*', offering a '*Christian rather than a secular approach to education*' (NICIE, 1989, Appendix 6), those involved in setting up the first integrated schools had no clear rationale underpinning how that Christian ethos was represented.

The historical backdrop to 1801.

The current Northern Ireland school system developed within a Christian rather than secular context, reflecting that historically, religious influence in education has had a long history in Ireland (Smith, 2001). Indeed, in many cases, schools were used as places to promote one or other religious or political viewpoint through the nature of their organisation and their ethos (Farren, 1995). It was the long held belief of the British government that, in order to guard against the possibility of Catholic dissent, control of education in Ireland was vital, as it was through education that the Catholic

masses could be contained (Akenson, 1973, p.52). So from the 17th century, the British government required state-funded schools in Ireland to promote '*the English order, habits and language*' (Godkin, 1862, p.20). These schools embodied a purposeful, proselytising, evangelical intent and, recognising the significance of school culture, they used a sense of British-ness in order to '*assist with developing English language in Ireland and for advancement of Protestant religion and education of lower classes*' (Akenson, 1973, p.25).

The British government also established a series of repressive penal laws, designed to sublimate Catholic religion and culture by effectively '*forbidding [*Catholic*] schoolmasters to teach*' (Ó hogartaigh, 2006, p.1). As a result, a parallel provision of Church-funded Catholic '*hedge-schools*' developed alongside the state, *de-facto* Protestant provision (Akenson, 1973, p.53). The unapologetic Protestant-British ethos of state schools in Ireland continued despite the emancipation delivered by repeal of the penal laws in 1793 (ibid, p.31), after which Catholic teachers could serve in state schools on the proviso that they took an oath of allegiance to the crown.

It was against this background that, during the century before the Act of Union (1801) which created the combined United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, a parallel system of de-facto Protestant (state-funded) and Catholic (non-funded) schools had developed, each with their own distinctive ethos.

The reinforcement of separate school ethos: 1801-1974.

The ethos of these two, rapidly emerging, separate systems involved a mixture of religion, culture and politics. During the period between 1801 and the establishment of the new state of Northern Ireland in 1921, successive British governments faced a growing war of attrition from the main Churches which desired to control their own schools by sustaining their own Protestant (British) and Catholic (Nationalist) cultures and ethos (McGrath, 2000, p.7).

Within 30 years of the union in 1801, the first move to create a national, non-denominational system of education (Farren,1995, p.5) took place when Lord Stanley, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, declared his intention '*to unite in one system, children of different creeds*' (Atkinson, 1969, p.93) in an attempt to, '*afford combined literary and moral and separate Religious Instruction to children of all persuasions, as far as possible in the same school*' (Smith, 2001, p.560). Despite the fact that the

new Education Act (1831) sought to transform education away from denominationalism (Buckland, 1979, p.247), it was unsuccessful, as the proposals succeeded in angering Protestant and Catholic clerics alike (McGrath, 2000, p.65).

Although the ethos of their schools was culturally British, the Protestant churches saw this as less significant than the need to have an overtly Christian emphasis, dissenting against what they believed to be the secularist agenda of the British Government. Rather than negotiate with what they saw as an intransigent, secular Westminster government, they attempted to establish their own schools (Farren, 1995, p.5). This separatist approach was partly borne out of a '*pathological fear of the Roman Catholic Church*' (Akenson, 1973, p.190) as the Protestant churches had lost the power to evangelise Catholics in their schools (McGrath, 2000, p.20). They also saw the Act as demeaning the teaching of religion and diminishing their control by placing teaching appointments under the control of the education committees. The Catholic Bishops perceived the reforms as challenging stewardship of Catholic ethos and as representing another element of the British government's hostile attitude towards Catholic schools (Farren, 1986, p.21).

By allowing church control to continue, the new national system remained Christian in ethos and allowed for the development of '*a religious apartheid policy ... that separated Catholic and Protestant children in 19th century Ireland*' (Akenson, 1973, p.385). The national primary schools soon became *de-facto* denominational schools (O'Buachalla, 1988, p.25) and the majority of children on the island of Ireland attended schools which were '*parochially organised, denominationally segregated and clerically managed*' (ibid, p.27) and which manifested two different understandings of Christian ethos. The denominational ethos which had pervaded the primary system, soon rolled over into the newly formed post- primary sector (Akenson, 1973 p.159), set up by the Butler Act of 1944, as each new post-primary school was required to provide an act of worship at the start of each school day and to include Religious Instruction in the curriculum. By the 1950s, the segregated system, operating within a range of de-facto denominational schools, was supported by both traditions. The only difference was perspective, wherein the Catholic Bishops focused on the need for centralised control, while the Protestant churches appeared satisfied '*with a more diffuse, although no less pervasive style of control over the educational institutions*' (Akenson, 1973 p.195).

The segregated system which had developed since the establishment of the new State appeared to have passive approval from Northern Ireland's clerical structures (Akenson, 1973, p.194). This was not surprising for, although the debate on denominational ethos from 1831 was driven by the churches, they had collectively contributed little to the shared-education debate (Farren, 2005, p.247). Indeed, it seemed to suit their respective positions to adopt a tacit policy of '*the less contact between children of the different churches, the better*' (ibid, p.247). Accordingly when, in the 1970's, parents began to lobby for integrated schools (O'Connor, 2002) the educational landscape they faced was dominated by two Church-directed or Church-related sectors, each supporting an overtly Christian ethos albeit outworked in different ways within the two distinct sectors. At this time there were a number of key elements which differentiated the Christian ethos expressed within the two main school types.

The Catholic ethos.

The Catholic ethos comprises a number of key elements.

It is universal and unchanging.

Catholic ethos is considered by the Church authorities to be unchanging, as it is derived from the Universal Catholic Church (Grace, 2002, p.151), which founded the schools and regulates the teachings (Catholic Education Service, 1999). In this context, Catholic schools reflect this universal Catholic ethos and form part of the trinity of institutions which support faith development, with the Church and the home as the other two partners (Catholic Bishops, 2001a; 2001c).

This concept of partnership was clearly expressed by Pope Pius XI in 1929, when he affirmed that '*the Catholic school is by its very nature an institution subsidiary and complementary to the family and the church*' (Osborne et al, 1987, p 117). The exclusive nature of this ethos meant that theologically,

> '*the only satisfactory system of education for Catholics is one wherein Catholic children are taught in Catholic schools by Catholic teachers under Catholic control*' (O'Buachalla, 1988, p 211)

It is exclusive.

Catholic canon law (Canon 1374) precludes Catholic children from being educated together with '*non-Catholics*', including attendance at neutral or mixed schools. It is only in rare circumstances that the Ordinary (the Bishop) allows this rule to be set

aside. Given this theological understanding it is difficult to see how any alternative to denominational schools would meet the Catholic churches requirements for Catholic education. In effect, Catholic ethos subsisted in a Catholic school. The ethos had to be pure and involve a healthy amount of Catholic faith development together with catechesis, as schools produced numerous young Catholic men for the priesthood (Akenson, 1973, p 147). This premise was reinforced in an important tract which argued against any other model of education except that provided through the Catholic school (Conway, 1970, p.11).

It is controlled by the church and the clergy.

The Catholic Church was content with a system where the majority of Catholic schools were clergy-run, where there was '*no restriction placed on the creation of a religious atmosphere within their walls*' (Titley, 1983, p.8). Laypeople were absent in this system as the Bishops equated Catholic control with clerical control as,

> '*the Catholic Church viewed the educational system as a moral rather than an educational responsibility and believed that the system of clerical control over each primary school was a moral necessity*' (Akenson, 1973, p 14)

A statement from the Northern Bishops in 1945 confirmed that,

> *'it is necessary that all teaching and the whole organisation of the school and its teachers, syllabus and text books in every branch be regulated by the Christian spirit under the direction and material supervision of the church'* (Akenson, 1973, p.347)

This theological position led the Catholic Church to an understanding that it had a responsibility to steward education in perpetuity, a role it carried out by maintaining a network of Catholic-managed institutions, reflecting within them a Catholic understanding of a Christian ethos (Catholic Bishops, 2008).

It is visible in its nature.

Catholic-managed schools contain overt and visible elements of ethos including observance of holy days, as well as visible manifestations (Farren, 1995, p.18), ranging from the use of saints names in schools through to the display of crucifixes and other denominational artefacts, to adherence of religious rituals including the making of the sign of the cross at prayer (Akenson, 1970, p.351). The significance of this visible ethos was highlighted by Conway (1970) when he reminded the government of the day that these were elements that state schools were unable to emulate (p.10). Catholic pupils have sacramental preparation within the school and

attend confirmation together as one group, demonstrating the clear link between school and church.

It is linked to a Nationalist political/cultural viewpoint.

Catholic ethos is also inextricably linked to political aspirations as, for Nationalists, '*Religious denomination and segregated schooling were the outward sign of an underlying dispute concerning ... the legitimacy of the state itself*' (McEwen, 1999, p.23). Generally the Catholic Church's educational policies were supported by the Nationalist-Catholic community (Farren, 1986, p.19), confirming the Unionist view that Catholic schools were '*religious redoubts ... nationalist bastions*' (McGrath, 2000, p.7). This suspicion was enhanced as Catholic schools taught Gaelic language and Irish history, two elements which suggested to Unionist politicians and the Protestant Orange Order in particular (ibid, p.9), that they were places where Irish nationalism was cultivated (ibid, p.7). This is not surprising as the control of education has always been a point of contention in the history of Northern Ireland as,

> '*religious denomination and segregated schooling are the outward sign of an underlying dispute concerning, from a nationalist viewpoint the legitimacy of the state itself and for the Protestants, a way of securing the Union through the state school's ethos of cultural and educational British-ness*' (McEwen, 1999, p.23).

The Protestant ethos.

The Protestant ethos also comprises a number of components.

Although Protestant in interpretation, it is not exclusive.

As Protestantism is a more individualistic faith with a multiplicity of denominations, there was no similar sense of a universal Protestant ethos passed on to all Church schools and, therefore, Protestant churches tend not to refer to their ethos as '*Protestant*' but prefer the word '*Christian*' (Ellis, 2006), reflecting a less exclusive claim to one denominational understanding of ethos than the Catholic Church So, it was not surprising that against the backdrop of community conflict in the 1970s, some debates on shared education began within the Protestant churches including the Presbyterian Assembly (Bardon, 2009, p.27) and the Church of Ireland synod where motions were passed regarding guarded support for religiously mixed schools (Dunn, 1990, p.84).

It operates through influence, rather than control.

When the state of Northern Ireland was established in 1921, all but a few schools were under the control of the main churches and were considered Christian by their

nature. This situation changed significantly when, in response to Protestant Church leaders' concerns, a new 1930 act provided for a minimum of 50% representation of transferor (Protestant) churches on the boards of transferred schools (Farren, 1995, p.95). By accepting this transfer of Church schools to the State, the Protestant churches were removed from direct control of schools and had to ensure that their influence was maintained in other ways, in those transferred '*Church-related schools*' (TRC, 1988). So, while the Catholic Trustees retained control of schools, including the oversight of ethos (Osborne et al, 1987), by relinquishing control (Ellis, 2006), Protestant churches were restricted to exerting influence through the 50% transferor representation on boards of governors (Smith, 2001, p.562). Although no longer controlling schools, this Protestant, Christian-based ethos still remains important for Transferors (Ellis, 2006, p.218), as,

> '*controlled schools have a religious and spiritual dimension and their continued operation in any neighbourhood contributes to the confidence of the Protestant population*', (Osborne et al, 1993, p.26).

It is biblically based.

Protestant churches do have some absolutes about the role of faith in ethos and agree that their school's ethos is essentially Christian (Osborne et al, 1993, p.26) and biblically-based in character (McGrath, 2000, p.80). For them, '*an education system which was not spiritually informed was inadequate and dangerous*' (TRC, 1988, para 1.2). A robust Christian ethos should be reflected in the spirit and tone of the school expressing itself in an intuitive as well as explicit manner (ibid, para 2.1). This ethos should be expressed by all involved in the school who help ensure that it will *'serve as a model of Christian living which in itself will 'be a testimony to the Gospel'* (ibid, para 2.1). The central place given to the role of teaching the Bible remained a core principle of the new controlled schools and is evidenced at assemblies as well as after-school clubs such as Scripture Union.

It is lay-led.

The development of a Christian ethos in Protestant schools relied more upon the influence of individuals and boards of schools than on central church control, reflecting a more lay-led approach than their Catholic counter-parts (Akenson, 1970, p.216). Individual school boards set the goals of the school informing its ethos by appointing staff and choosing the books used for curricular instruction. Despite the fact that teachers in Protestant schools were lay-people, they were still required to take religious tests until the early 20th century to ensure they would be individuals

who were able to influence the Christian (Protestant) ethos of the schools (ibid, p.371).

It has little visible symbolism.

Protestant churches, particularly those which emerged from the Reformation, display little in the way of religious symbols or images. For the Protestant transferors ethos is not represented in pictures or artefacts but is more practical and evidenced in '*the positive promotion of the spiritual in school worship, religious education and throughout the whole curriculum*' (TRC, 1988, para 2.1). It permeates all elements of school life, responds to world issues and serves the glory of God. Many controlled schools do, however, display children's art making reference to Bible stories or religious events.

It reflects a British culture.

Politically, the nature of Protestant ethos was perceived as '*Protestant-British*' in character (McEwen, 1999, p.8), evidenced when the Belfast Education Committee (1931) legislated that '*the Union Flag was to be recognised as an essential part of school equipment*' (McGrath, 2000, p.97). In addition, a number of controlled schools displayed pictures of the Royal family (Murray, 1985).

The establishment of integrated schools.

It was against this background of the development of two separate manifestations of school ethos, that the movement for integrated schools began (Bardon, 2009, p.24).

All Children Together.

Modern-day integrated education was initiated by a group of Catholic parents who formed an organisation, All Children Together (ACT), in November 1973 (O'Connor, 2002). The idea followed a series of abortive attempts by those parents to engage with local Catholic clergy over the matter of what they perceived to be unequal treatment of Catholic children attending non-Catholic schools (Linehan, 2003, p.31). It had been normal practice, in keeping with the ethos of Catholic-managed schools, for pupils attending Catholic primary schools to be prepared for the sacraments (first confession and confirmation) within the school day (Bardon, 2009, p.38). Arrangements had been made for Catholic children, attending non-Catholic schools to be prepared separately and, subsequently, to be confirmed and receive first communion together with their Catholic peers in Church, making no distinction between the two sets of children based on the schools they attended (ibid, 2009, p.39). In 1969 rules were introduced by the Catholic Church precluding such children

from confirmation with their peers from Catholic schools (ibid, p.32) and in 1973 those children were prohibited outright from confirmation (Linehan, 2003, p.34). For these Catholic parents this was a decision whereby the Church was denying faith development to their children because they had not attended Catholic schools. In consequence they believed that the Church was sending out a signal about how it perceived their faith, by treating them as '*second class citizens*' (Bardon, 2009, p.43).

The parents believed they had no choice except to challenge this position and so formed a new charity, ACT, in 1973 (O'Connor, 2002, p.50) which, although predicated on the aim to secure religious education and confirmation of Catholic children, also desired to open discussions with the Catholic Church to explore shared education (Linehan, 2003, p.35). They did not wish to set up a new school sector, but felt that the churches could come up with a solution for the dilemma they faced.

The Christian origins of the movement.

ACT set out to establish shared schools which would be Christian in essence, something it believed would allow for better engagement with the churches and ensure that they would provide the appropriate Religious Education, sacramental preparation and pastoral care (Bardon, 2009, p.53). By 1974 some Protestant parents had joined ACT, which by this stage had become an inter-denominational, Christian organisation (ibid, p.52).

In April 1974 the Minister for Education of the short-lived, Northern Ireland, multi-party, power-sharing Executive, Basil McIvor, introduced a shared-school plan backed by a budget of £13 million for schools in which Catholic and Protestant churches shared management (Dunn, 1990, p.85). This requirement for the two main churches' involvement, underpinned the Christian nature of the proposed new schools. Due to political disagreement, however, the power-sharing executive fell in the same year and the plan remained unfulfilled.

As ACT did not wish to set up a new sector (Fraser and Morgan, 1999, p.28) it supported a Private Member's Bill (1977) designed to allow existing controlled schools (de-facto Protestant) to become controlled-integrated schools, if requested by Church representatives on boards (Dunn, 1990, p.85). This offered the churches a central role, reinforcing the Christian nature of integrated schools. The Bill required that integration should be parent-driven and not government-led, but as a

consequence this meant that it offered policy rhetoric without any process by which parents could avail themselves of an integrated choice (ibid, p.86).

The drive to develop integrated schools was taken up by the new direct-rule Minister of Education, Dr Brian Mawhinney, who suggested taking forward legislation to establish grant-maintained, integrated schools (Bardon, 2009, p.198). Although a devout Christian, Mawhinney accepted that his personal faith-commitment formed only one element of his support for faith-based, shared schools (1999, p.95), and so did not require those schools to demonstrate a Christian ethos. The Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order became law in 1989 and remains the seminal piece of legislation creating the legal duty on the Department of Education (DE) '*to encourage and facilitate integrated education*' (ibid, Article 64:1a). Although defining integrated education as '*the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils*' (Article 64:1b), it made no mention of Christian ethos and was ambiguous on clarifying how integrated status was acquired and how the management and funding structures would operate, as it neither defined the outcomes of integration nor the essential criteria to be met for approval (Dunn, 1990, p.86).

The purpose of integration.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the period in which the movement for integrated schools developed, all of Northern Ireland life and governmental policy was set within the context of the ongoing violence (Bardon, 2009, p.23), something generally interpreted by the British government as an ethnic conflict between two main communities or ethnic groups (Bruce, 1994). Against this background, there was growing concern that there might be a connection between segregated schooling and conflict (Murray, 1985; Darby, 1997), an observation based on two differing views: the cultural hypothesis (Magee, 1970) and the social hypothesis (Murray, 1985; McGlynn, 2004). In the first theory, segregated schools presented pupils with two different views of their cultural environment (Gallagher, 2011 in Richardson and Gallagher, 2011, p.73). In the second, it was suggested that separation itself reinforced ignorance and entrenched difference (Murray, 1985). While there was little evidence to support the cultural apartheid theory (Gallagher, 1995), some existed to support the premise that segregation was problematic in and of itself.

As it was accepted that there was a segregated system of education with '*little evidence of a significant cross-over between the two sectors*' (Dunn, 1990, p.86), the

response was to facilitate a more fluid education provision with increased inter-community mixing. As the British government saw integrated education as a method of bringing children from the two main traditions together at an early age and not a new pedagogy, it seemed content to highlight the problems of segregation (Dunn, 1990, p.87), rather than the benefits of integration (McGrath, 2000, p.234).

Integrated education was based neither on a belief that the two separate systems were inherently flawed, nor upon any philosophical understanding of what constituted an alternative, integrated environment (Bardon, 2009, p.58). It was rather predicated on the belief that integrated schools could become places wherein pupils from the two main communities could meet safely to explore their differences, with trained teachers (NICIE, 1989). The premise was that if separating children in a divided society might perpetuate sectarian attitudes (Dunn, 1990, p.84), then facilitating shared schools might allow them to get to know one another, learn to live with difference (Bardon, 2009, p.54) and develop lifelong friendships (Irwin, 1991). These ideas drew support from the research of two of the founding members of the movement.

Tony Spencer argued that Northern Ireland's segregation was ethno-religious (Spencer, 1987, in Osborne et al, 1987, pp.99-113) and because Northern Ireland's education system was drawn up on religious grounds, such segregation was dysfunctional and needed to be challenged through sharing, based on robust outworking of contact theory (Allport, 1954). This theory argued that facilitated inter-group contact could reduce prejudice between diverse groups, provided certain criteria were met. These included equality of status, common goals, lack of competition and authority for the contact (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000 in Oscamp, 2000). Spencer (1987, in Osborne et al, 1987, p.106) warned against assimilation in favour of new, integrated models, including formally integrated schools.

The idea of creating safe places for children to meet was pursued by Frank Wright, who suggested that '*if children are to have a better future, then they must experience new ways of meeting with others*' (Wright, 1991, p.12). It was this concept of '*safe space*' which motivated the founders who were more focused on outcomes than pedagogy and never intended setting up an alternative system (Morgan et al, 1992, p.28). Intentional mixing of pupils was core to the new idea and in order to ensure that a robust cross-community mix was facilitated, an early aim was to have roughly equal numbers of the two traditions reflected in the school, as the process and

outcome of integration was more important than the structures and policies (NICIE 1989, p.6).

Developing an integrated ethos.

The first attempt to define the nature of integrated schools came in the NICIE Statement of Principles (1989), a document created by the newly emerging movement which included references to UN conventions and openness to including all faiths and none (NICIE, 1989, Appendix 6). As the schools would intentionally educate together children from the two main Christian traditions, it was considered necessary to ensure the schools contained a robust cross-community mix and so the Statement recorded that schools should have roughly equal numbers of the two traditions in the pupil, teaching and governance profiles (ibid, p.6). Although the Statement emphasised the role of parents and governors in the school, it made no reference to what constituted an integrated ethos. It did, however, affirm that integrated schools '*should be essentially Christian in character*' providing '*a Christian rather than a secular approach to education*' (p. 7)

The authors attempted to lay down some guiding principles on how Religious Education and faith-development might be addressed. As the schools needed to ensure that the needs of Catholic parents were met, the statement affirmed that '*children shall learn together all that we can reasonably expect them to learn together*' (NICIE, 1999, Religion para a), but recognised that

> '*Where the school population includes significant numbers of children of a particular religious community, separate provision should be made to prepare such children for sacramental and liturgical participation in that specific religious community if their parents so wish. In addition the school shall encourage ministers of such religious communities to visit the school, take a pastoral interest in the children and get to know the parents and teachers*' (ibid, para b).

In reflecting the nature of Catholic faith development and the role played by schools in that area, sacramental preparation was to be provided in integrated schools (ibid, para e) but recognition was also afforded to parents who wished to withdraw their children from this element (ibid, para e).

The visual differences between the two main traditions were recognised and so '*where there are significant differences in liturgical practice between the two major communities*' (e.g. in the making of the sign of the cross) '*children should be encouraged to continue with their normal practice*' (ibid, para g). This was extended to,

> *'the text of the Lord's Prayer 'readings and music for school assemblies and gatherings, [where] care shall be taken to ensure equal prominence for the two major traditions and fair representation of other groups of significant size within the school community' (ibid, para f).*

The Statement offered an inclusive understanding of Christian ethos allowing for age-appropriate introduction of '*the ideas, beliefs and practices of the major world religions and humanist philosophies*' (ibid, para c).

Although the final section recognised the place of culture and identity in school ethos, referring to the need for the whole curriculum to be set in a context of sensitivity to Northern Ireland's divided history, it failed to define a successful integrated outcome.

Since then, several documents have been developed including the Anti-Bias Curriculum (NICIE, 1994), a guide to integration for teachers (NICIE, 2001) and most recently a revised Statement of Principles, drawn up in the context of the peace process and arrival of new communities (NICIE, 2010, Appendix 7). The first paragraph of the new document opens with a Statement of Ethos as follows,

> *'the integrated school provides a learning environment where children and young people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, as well as those of other faiths and none, can learn with, from and about each other. The promotion of equality and good relations extends to everyone in the school and to their families regardless of their religious, cultural or social background. Integrated education is value- driven, child-centred. It is delivered through a holistic approach with an emphasis on developing every aspect of a child's or young person's potential*'. (NICIE, 2010)

Although the Christian nature of integrated schools is confirmed in this new document some additional elements are added including the growing multi-cultural nature of Northern Ireland.

> '*the school will seek to acknowledge significant religious and cultural celebrations which are representative of other faiths'* (para b) and '*will encourage religious and community leaders to visit and participate in school activities*' (para c).

Summary.

For the past 180 years, the history of education in what is now Northern Ireland, has been one entangled in a web of sectarian politics and ecclesiastical intrigues (Farren, 1995, p.1), where education has been used as a bargaining tool for alternative agendas. Over that period, the churches have pursued an agenda which could be described as equal and separate. The Catholic Church, through its schools, '*fostered*

an ethos which fused religious and cultural beliefs and knowledge' (McEwen, 1999, p.25), while Protestant churches continued to develop their own ethos (Hughes, 2011, p.845) set within an '*overarching Christian emphasis with links to daily worship*' (TRC, 2005).

Although successive governments since the early 19th century attempted to establish the basis for shared schools, subsequent discussions, debates and compromises with the churches (McGrath, 2000, p.237) and politicians have led to an educational provision drawn up largely on denominational grounds. Although the Catholic Church appears comfortable with this situation (ibid, p.254), Protestant fears remain as having lost control over their schools, they can only hope to exert implicit influence over those they transferred (ibid, 252). For Protestant churches control had been '*a way of securing the Union through the state school's ethos of cultural and educational British-ness*' (McEwen, 1999, p.23; Farren, 1995).

Against this landscape a new integrated sector developed which, defines itself as '*essentially Christian in character*', but which has not clearly articulated the nature of that integrated ethos.

In order to contextualise the research questions it will be necessary in the following chapter to review the literature relating to school ethos with a emphasis on the development of an integrated ethos in Northern Ireland.

Chapter 3. Literature Review.

General Introduction.

The previous chapter suggested that the educational context from which the movement for integrated schools developed was defined as much by religion and politics (McGrath, 2000) as it was by any strategic, educational policy. As it is proposed to consider the nature of ethos within integrated schools it will be important to examine how ethos has been defined and understood within schools, with particular reference to the educational system of Northern Ireland.

Integrated schools operate in a demanding educational system wherein they compete for pupils with other school providers, albeit drawn largely from the two main traditions (McEwen, 1999, p.14). As integrated schools need to incorporate an ethos which will embrace pupils from both traditions, reflecting the Christian roots of the Northern Ireland education system, it is important to consider how they have approached these challenges.

Accordingly in this chapter, after considering definitions, the literature on school ethos will be explored, followed by an overview of the development of an integrated ethos since the foundation of the movement with a specific focus on its *'essentially Christian character'* (NICIE, 1989).

Understanding ethos.

Ethos is a term now regularly used in educational literature, with some researchers, Rutter et al (1979, p.183) and Williams (2000) believing it to be the most significant element of educational experience.

> *'When lessons are forgotten...the ethos of the school we attended could remain part of our consciousness... as the ethos of a school touches the quality of our lives and can constitute an abiding element in the fabric of our very identity...'*
> (Williams, 2000, p.76)

Despite the paucity of evidence as to its nature (Donnelly, 2000, p.134) and even less in relation to its measurement (National Society for Promoting Religious Education, 2008), staff understanding (Frances and Grindle, 2001) and educative significance (McLaughlin, 2005, p.306), ethos has entered government policy and cannot be ignored (Strivens, 1985).

The Department for Education in England encourages schools to develop a robust ethos as '*schools with a strong sense of identity or ethos perform best*' (DfEE, 2001, 4:11), while the Department of Education (DE), Northern Ireland (1998, p.3) suggests '*the school ethos and curriculum are important vehicles for the inculcation of values and the promotion of attitudinal change*'. In addition DE is about to establish sectoral bodies to support ethos development under the review of public administration (DE, 2007).

The education systems in both the Republic of Ireland and Scotland have developed sets of ethos indicators for schools (McLaughlin, 2005, p.307) and in England, since 1998, governors of all voluntary schools with a religious character, are required by the School Standards and Framework Act to develop an ethos statement (1998, Schedule 12, paragraph 1:1, section g). In Northern Ireland, following research involving a two year study by undergraduate, post-primary student teachers (who visited three schools reflecting the three perceived, different sectoral ethos in Northern Ireland), a consensus emerged suggesting ten perceived ethos indicators including school policies, leadership, activities and measures of success (Nelson, 2008).

Ethos has become a multi-faceted, ambiguous term that is in danger of becoming impossible to define (Montgomery et al, 2003, p.100). Part of this ambiguity lies in the fact that, despite the widespread use of the word, it is clear that the terms

> *'ethos, spirit, climate, atmosphere, ambience and culture are used interchangeably without anyone defining what they actually mean'.* (Whitehead, 2006, p.3)

However intangible, ethos must be tied down or it remains at the level of abstraction (Crick, 2002, p.1) and ambiguity (Barr, 2000, p.131). It is necessary, therefore, to offer some understanding of what the term actually means within a school context.

Ethos: the debate in the literature.

Despite linked in meaning to its Greek genesis, (εθος, - character or disposition) and defined as '*the characteristic spirit, prevalent tone or sentiment, of a people or community' (OED)*, ethos remains an elusive concept with researchers taking a variety of views on its nature (McLaughlin, 2005, p.306). So ethos can,

> *'be mobilized in such varied and sometimes conflicting ways in part because it remains a nebulous concept: an atheoretical and 'empty signifier' that can be filled with meanings to suit different contexts, purposes and speakers'.*

(Bragg and Manchester, 2011, p.1)

Some researchers attempt to avoid the word, while others reluctantly accept the term but see it as such a vague concept, only becoming intelligible when linked to other words such as climate, and atmosphere (Allder, 1993, p.69). Few researchers accept that ethos is a synonym for culture (Prosser, 1999, p.13), with most differentiating between the two, with ethos generally accepted as the more subjective and less easy to measure features of school atmosphere, which, although capable of being expressed in policy and statements, are often very different things in lived experience (Donnelly, 2000). Unlike ethos, which is often intangible (Grant, 1988), culture is visible and is reflected in a transmitted pattern of meaning, frequently embodied in symbols and rituals (Donnelly, 2000, p.144) and linked to human behaviours.

In essence, ethos is '*the expression of the school's core values which determine its character and guide the daily life and direction of the school*' (Boldt, 2000, in Furlong and Monahan, 2000, p.41). Despite the acknowledgement that ethos and culture are different entities (McLaughlin, 2005, p.310), it is generally accepted that they work together to drive the school and affect its nature (Allder, 1993, p.63ff).

Solvason understands culture as '*the basis on which the day-to-day life at the school is built*' (2005, p.85) which produces ethos, the '*ambience that is felt at a school as a result of its cultural history; past, present and ever changing*' (ibid, p.86). For Solvason, ethos is something derived from experiencing the culture of the organisation and, consequently, is dependent upon culture for its existence (p.85). People '*recognise and comprehend school culture, whereas [*they*] experience the ethos*' (p.87). The two are, therefore, inter-dependent, in that, ethos is the underlying value base that animates culture, while culture is the environment in which pupils grow. This is important for Solvason, as '*culture has solidarity where ethos is more elusive*'. He believes, therefore, that Donnelly (2000), Prosser (1999) and Rutter et al (1979) all used the term ethos incorrectly in their research (p.86).

In a contrary observation, Eisner sees ethos as '*... the deep underlying structure of a culture, the values that animate it that collectively constitute its way of life*' (frontispiece, 1994). Eisner suggests there might be a significant difference between '*the intentional*' (p.5) character of the school and '*the pedagogical*' (p.9) or '*clinical nature of teaching*' (p.2). The intentional element is important in setting the context in which ethos can be developed and, more significantly, sustained (p.7). The pedagogical is likened to what teachers do, the component often referred to as

classroom ethos. For Eisner, the strategic context forms the environment which *'creates conditions in the school that will enable teachers to understand what they do when they teach'* (p.9). So the school ethos has consequences for classroom ethos.

In summary, ethos is generally interpreted as something intangible, but experienced nonetheless as a combination of attitudes, values and beliefs which identify a particular group of individuals or an organisation (Grant, 1988, p.133). Culture is seen as the tangible, visible manifestation of the group, drawing from the ethos and reflecting that ethos in its practices. Despite being in some way tied to, and shaped by, structure, culture transcends structure and can change structures (Stolph and Smith, 1995, p.14). What is believed, *ethos,* should find expression in how it is practised, *culture*.

Torrington and Weighman (1989) support this link to practice suggesting that culture is the spirit of an organisation demonstrated in values and norms, while ethos is a self-conscious expression of objectives linked to core values and behaviours (p.18). Glover and Coleman also pick up on the subjective nature of ethos, proposing that while culture relates to the integration of organisational, environmental and experiential elements of the school's existence, ethos is '*the more subjective values and principles underpinning policy and practice*' (p.266).

Smith (2003) also identifies the practical element of ethos observing that ethos is that aspect of a school's culture which directly impinges on a student's learning (p.466), mediated largely by teachers (Drudy and Lynch, 1993). For Smith, it is a construction arising from social interaction within the school (cf. Donnelly, 2000), involving staff and pupils (Smith, 2003, p.466) and will have the most positive impact when those two sets of expectations converge (ibid, p.468). While recognising ethos has practical consequences, it cannot simply be evaluated through the examination of documents, policies and statements (McLaughlin, 2005, p.321) as it is '*value laden ... linked to vision ... potent and pervasive ... enduring and ... unconscious*' (ibid, p.314). McLaughlin argues that experienced ethos exerts its influence in indirect ways and should speak for itself without any accompanying narrative. In practice, it aspires to be taken for granted (ibid, p.314).

School ethos.

In terms of its nature, an organisational ethos is broadly contextualised either as a static entity existing independently of social interactions, termed a positivist view (Donnelly, 2000, p.135), or something more fluid which results from an amalgam of

elements including the inter-relationships of people within the organisation, termed an anti-positive view (ibid, p.135). Understood within a framework of social realities, it exists in and of itself as an organisational attribute. Therefore, an organisation *has* an ethos, which might be defined as '*those ethical principles and educational policies upon which the school strives to base all its activities*' (Furlong and Monahan, 2000, p.171). Parents in the Marino Institute research in 1997 supported this positivist view with a relatively high percentage of respondents understanding that ethos was something determined by the trustees of the school (Grace, 2002, p.36), believing themselves unable to influence that ethos (Boldt, 2000, in Furlong and Monahan, 2000). Barr in supporting this view suggests that '*ethos is what the trustees determine to be the aims, values and conduct of the school*' (p.42).

Ethos may also be something more fluid and interactive when understood as the outcome of relationships and values which *emanate* from social interactions within an environment (Allder, 1993, p.69). So people in reaction to one another can and do create an ethos (Wright, 1991, p.7) and therefore can, and arguably do, change an ethos (Lemon,1993, in Moffat, 1993, pp.121-131). Burgess, while accepting that Catholic ethos is custodial, believes that it can, nonetheless, be altered by the principal and staff (1985, p.183).

If the premise is accepted that ethos and culture are different, but so closely linked that there is a cross-over between the two (Smith, 2003, p.466), that an ethos exists apart from an organisation (Allder, 1993) and is school-specific (Murray, 2000, in Furlong and Monahan, 2000, p.16), then it is reasonable to suggest that a school ethos if not fixed (Donnelly, 2000, p.150) is capable of being changed (Whitehead, 2006, p.14).

While accepting the durable nature of ethos (Smith, 2003, p.467), most researchers believe that it has the potential to change and be changed (Smith, 2003), albeit recognising that such a process is difficult (Prosser, 1999, p.8). This potential to change is inherent in the transformation process, as one of the requirements for a school proposing to take on integrated status is to transform its ethos (DE, 2005).

Research suggests that ethos operates at a number of levels with McLaughlin (2005), for example, suggesting at least two, the aspirational and the experienced levels (p.312). At an aspirational, outward-facing level, ethos is described in vision and mission statements and can be promoted through these means. At an inward-

facing level, ethos is experienced by staff, pupils and visitors and can be made explicit and intentional (ibid, p.312).

Donnelly suggests three distinct levels, two of which are outward-facing, '*aspirational*' and '*outward attachment*' and one of which is inward-facing, an '*ethos of inward attachment*' (2000, p.151). The two external dimensions of ethos are described as '*superficial*', while the third element is described as '*deep*'. Her research highlighted the differences between the superficial and the deep levels, wherein '*the genuine attitudes and beliefs of some school members [*were*] at odds with the official objectives of the school*' (p.151). The deep level, that of inner attachment, is more difficult to access and interpret, but it is this level which Donnelly feels has the potential to be of '*considerable import in the negotiation and reconstruction of school ethos*' (p.152). For Donnelly, '*the value of understanding a school's ethos lies in the fact that it isolates the factors which are likely to foster school effectiveness*' (p.152).

Although having some generic attributes, Murray (2000, in Furlong and Monahan, 2000, p.17) suggests ethos is school-specific and evidenced in two areas, character (created by internal influences) and culture (a consequence of school type). It is this synthesis of the macro and micro character of the school which helps shape ethos (ibid, p.15). For Murray there are four '*essential elements in the process of a school developing an ethos which is appropriate to both its characteristic and cultural needs*' (ibid p.19), involving clarity of mission, consensus of support, commitment to work required and what he calls '*stickability*'. Work to maintain and support the school-specific, aspirational ethos (Donnelly, 2000, p.151), may be reasonably contained within the school's mission statement and vision (Murray, 2000) and should animate the day-to-day praxis (McLaughlin, 2005). For some school sectors, particularly faith schools, ethos has implied religious connotations, whereas in fact the term need not imply anything religious (Williams, 2000, in Furlong and Monahan, 2000, p.77).

Research carried out on Trinity Academy, a faith-based City Academy in Yorkshire, suggested that the school's intentional (in this case, Christian) ethos had assisted in a positive transformation of the nature of the school, including improved results (Pike, 2010, p.756). The core values of the school reflected its Christian foundation and were embedded in the Mission statement of the school where the Academy is defined as '*having a Christian ethos'* (ibid, p.751). Pike contends that in the case of Trinity, the core values reflected in the aspirational ethos (Donnelly, 2000) and the core values experienced through the applied ethos, '*as interpreted by students and*

staff (not just intended by leaders or sponsors)' were congruent (Pike, 2010, p.751). In the case of Trinity, these values included '*justice, honesty, civility, democratic process and a respect for truth'* (Lickona, 1991, cited in Pike, 2010, p.75). In Trinity, the school ethos supported the discussion of the core values wherein students are actively encouraged to debate 'truth claims' and values (ibid, p.760).
Although the research conclusion was challenged by Bragg (2011, p.562) it has subsequently been defended again by Pike (2011). Inspectors in a recent report on Trinity commented that,

> '*schools with a Christian ethos are particularly effective with more socially disadvantaged pupils and as such appear to offer much to the common good of society' (*OFSTED, 2007, p.4*).*

Although primarily experienced, ethos has also visible and tangible components. Murray (1985) and Donnelly (2000) both suggest this is reinforced through rituals, symbols and religious practices which align with the two main religious traditions in Northern Ireland (Donnelly, 1999). It can also be evidenced in the materials and publications of the school, as well as the uniform and signage.

In Northern Ireland there are three main school types, Controlled (*de facto* Protestant), Maintained (almost exclusively Catholic) and Integrated (educating Protestant and Catholics together). As the boards of schools have a role in directing the strategic development of the school and employing staff, it was not therefore surprising that Donnelly's research found that governor relationships both reflected and reinforced each school's distinctive ethos (ibid, p.237).

Classroom ethos.

It is generally accepted that ethos is inherently value laden, not static (Donnelly, 2004a, p.15) and linked to relationships (McLaughlin, 2005, p.312). It is a multi-layered, negotiated process which can both constrain and encourage people who work within its influence (ibid, p.15). So ethos changes as new people join the organisation and new relationships are developed (Donnelly 1999, p.225). However, this does not disallow the existence of a '*dominant ethos which defines for individuals how things should be done round here*' (ibid). If ethos is to shape school practice (McLaughlin, 2005, p.312), it needs to be properly communicated (Montgomery et al, 2003, p.20) and understood across the school community or it risks being rejected by staff (Solvason, 2005, p.88). Bragg and Manchester observed that interactions between staff and students were also key drivers of ethos (2011, p.562).

If the view is accepted that there is a custodial element to ethos (Hogan, 1984, p.695) not limited to governors, it is reasonable to posit that the principal (Donnelly, 1999, p.232) and senior staff could have a significant role in creating and maintaining the ethos (Fraser and Morgan, 1999) and that teachers have a role in sustaining ethos in the classroom.

As ethos is a negotiated phenomenon, then

> '*teachers are ultimately responsible for transmitting [inclusive] values and contributing to an ethos which champions the richness of a culture and social diversity*' (Donnelly, 2004b, p.265)

In this context Donnelly suggests that,

> '*the influence of teacher values in shaping and determining the ethos of the school continues to be underestimated by the key players in the education system*' (ibid, p.277).

In order for teachers to transmit a school's ethos, they need to be supportive of the values underpinning the ethos and '*actively enact the ethos [*of inclusiveness*] through their everyday work and through their own collegial relationships*' (ibid, p.265). Donnelly believes that for this to be effective requires space to have facilitated, open discussion wherein teachers can explore their own values and beliefs. Solvason observes that whole school ethos involves '*buy in*' from teachers (2005, p.88) and recognises that as sub-cultures exist within schools, classroom practice might not reflect stated ethos (p.89).

Such a whole-school ethos requires full staff collaboration (ibid, p.92), good communication (p.89) and training to be maintained. Webb (2009) points to the key role played by teachers in developing an inclusive ethos by promoting (or denying) collaborative dialogue in the classroom and like Donnelly, also advocates the need to have well trained teachers to maximise good discursive classroom practice (ibid, p.16).

The nature of ethos: a summary.

From this brief excursus, it can be seen that ethos is school-specific and multi-layered, but is not a fixed phenomenon and is capable of changing and being changed, although not without considerable effort. It is a negotiated process, involving governors, principals and teachers and has visible as well as experiential elements. It has a custodial element to it, being held in trust, with varying degrees of direction, by the principal and governors. It emanates from, and should demonstrate in practice, the core values and beliefs of the school, applying to whole school policies and practice. There can, however, be dissonance between these claimed values and the views of the staff who are charged to transmit the ethos. In order to place this research in its specific context, it is important to consider the literature relating specifically to integrated schools.

Integrated ethos.

The background.

Not surprisingly, given the relatively late arrival of integrated schools to the Northern Ireland educational system, it is difficult to draw on a substantive body of research evidence examining the ethos which integrated schools were established to reflect (McGlynn, 2005, p.56), much less, to allow for any clear understanding of how such ethos can be monitored as, '*the problem with defining integration through the expression of its ethos is that it becomes a pursuit of the vague by means of the intangible*' (Whitehead, 2006, p.3). Donnelly and Hughes highlighted the nature of this situation in 2006

> *'When probed, participants [*in Northern Ireland*] revealed that a wide variety of competing interpretations prevailed...Whilst individuals may have officially expressed a commitment to the objectives of integrated education, often what they were committed to departed either significantly from the official rhetoric of integrated education or from their colleagues' interpretation of an integrated school. Yet because differences were never discussed, relations were defined by ambiguity and often underpinned by latent tension' (p 513)*

When Murray first raised questions about how an integrated ethos might develop and how it might deal with contentious issues (1985, p.133) there were only four integrated schools. When a subsequent analytical literature review was carried out (Abbott et al, 1999) only 10 integrated schools existed. Given that integrated schools were established to offer shared classrooms to children from the two main traditions,

it is not unreasonable to assume that an integrated ethos, as a specific entity, might be a conscious construct, involving an amalgam of elements of known Catholic and Protestant culture (McEwen, 1999; Dunn et al, 1990). Indeed Dunn suggested that an integrated ethos should be intentional and could be defined as celebrating '*both identities by allowing them to live and flourish side by side within the schools with tolerance and respect*' (1989, p.122). Fraser and Morgan's observations (2001) supported this need for intentionality and challenged the integrated school movement to assert its distinctiveness by going beyond mixed enrolment and staffing (p.45),and by developing an expressly integrated ethos. Wright agreed that this integrated ethos should be something new, intentional and needed to include parents in its development (1991, p.12). This intentionality should be driven by the board and so governors in integrated schools should have a strategic role in clarifying a number of significant areas of school life which affect the nature of those schools, including ethos (Wilson and Dunn, 1989). This was reinforced by Wilson and Dunn (1989) who emphasised the centrality of parental involvement in this process and highlighted the importance of ensuring that Religious Education (RE) included those of other faith traditions and none (ibid).

In 1990, Dunn and other colleagues suggested that although no clear integrated curriculum had been created, a specific integrated ethos was in the process of being developed and consolidated. Following an ethnographic study into one grant-maintained integrated college, Johnston, (2001) concluded that twenty years after the foundation of the first integrated school a new integrated ethos was clearly recognisable. During her research she found it was capable of being discussed by the pupil population indicating '*a direct manifestation of the well pronounced mission of the school*' (2001, p.15). This was confirmed by Abbott who suggested that '*pupils had clear perceptions of the ethos of integration, felt they fitted in at different levels and could confront diversity in a safe environment*' (2010, p.843).

Shared space and contact.

The core aim behind the establishment of integrated schools was to bring together pupils from the two main religious traditions (ERO, 1989, Article 64:1b), in roughly equal numbers (NICIE, 1989) in shared classrooms. The need to share classrooms derives from an understanding that if separating children in schools perpetuated sectarian attitudes (Dunn, 1990, p.84) then sharing classrooms might promote positive cross-community relationships (Loughrey et al, 2003, p.31). As has been outlined in the previous chapter, the process of sharing classrooms between children

of the two differing religious traditions draws on contact theory (Allport 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), a process explored in some detail in the literature on schools generally (Brown and Hewstone, 2005) and integrated schools in particular (Stringer et al, 2009 and 2010).

It is now generally accepted, that inter-group contact is linked to improvement in out-group attitudes (Stringer et al, 2009), inter-group forgiveness and reduced inter-group anxiety (Hewstone et al, 2006; Niens and Cairns, 2005). Stringer et al (2009) suggested that integrated schools can provide such an environment (p.237) as,

> '*the integrated school environment tends to play down group membership in most integrated schools, providing a safe environment in which cross-group friendships can develop*' (p.251)

This research also found evidence to suggest that when teachers in mixed schools facilitated positive inter-group contact, pupils' attitudes could change. This is important '*in providing clear evidence that contact can lead to improved intergroup relations through the moderation of deeply held political viewpoints*' (ibid, p.253).

Interestingly, despite confirming the importance of inter-group contact on moderating extreme social attitudes, Stringer et al's later research in 2010, found that school ethos '*had no significant effects on children's political attitudes*'. The results did, however, highlight the fact that '*parental, religious group and contact effects are the major factors in shaping children's political attitudes in school settings*' (p.236). Research by Pettigrew and Tropp (2000) suggests that in terms of intergroup contact, knowledge of '*the other*' is the most significant mediator in reducing prejudices (greater than reducing anxiety and increasing empathy).

There has been a suggestion that integrated schools might create a hybrid, overlaying integrated identity (McClenahan et al, 2003, p.517), but the long-term research of research by Hayes et al (2006) and Stringer et al (2010) have,

> *'provided reassurance that intergroup contact with other group members brought about through school mixing can both challenge a rigid adherence to bi-polar political attitudes and at the same time maintain group identity'* (Stringer, 2010, p.237)

However, despite the long history of research on contact theory, including work within integrated schools (Niens and Cairns, 2005), there is still,

'a question around the extent to which it is really believed that, by a process of osmosis, the integrated schools will generate more tolerant and less prejudiced individuals. The evidence presented here suggests that some [teachers, students] are unconvinced of this argument, but that it serves as a convenient rationale for not having to engage in inter-group activity that has the potential to induce conflict or tension that teachers feel ill-equipped to deal with'. (Hughes and Donnelly, 2006, p.9).

Difference between school types.

There is some evidence to support the view that grant-maintained integrated schools have been more intentional in developing an integrated ethos than transformed schools (i.e those schools which have chosen to take on integrated status). Following research into ten integrated primary schools, Marriott (2001) observed that the type of integrated school (whether it was transformed or grant maintained), was reflected in its ethos. While accepting that '*ethos, or the extent to which policies were alive, was difficult to assess*' (p.24), he suggested that new, grant-maintained schools demonstrated a clearer understanding of integration than their transformed counterparts, and concluded that '*there was a fundamental difference in policy and ethos between the different types of [*integrated*] school'* (p.22). Although Marriott observed that, in the main, board members in both school types were distant from school day-to-day life, ethos development was less pronounced in controlled-integrated schools. This finding was confirmed in Loughrey et al's (2003) study of ten different integrated primary schools which noted a discernible difference in how grant-maintained and controlled-integrated (transformed) schools dealt with integration in practice (p.44). The research found that GMI (Grant-maintained integrated) schools were clearer about the need to engage as part of their mission, while controlled-integrated schools saw it as more optional (p.45).

Stewardship.

In keeping with a custodial understanding of ethos development, Dawson (2003), Montgomery (Montgomery et al, 2003, p.16) observed that although principals in integrated schools tended to lead in ethos development), this task was often assigned a low priority due to other work pressures (ibid, p.18) or principal's personality. Donnelly's research in 1999, confirmed that '*there is no doubt that the personality of the principal [*in each case*] had a considerable influence on the relationships which exist [*in the schools*]*' (p.232). Donnelly's study also highlighted that inter-relationships between the principal and governors was complex particularly in terms of agreeing each school's aims (p.237) and defining roles and responsibilities in stewarding and developing school ethos (p.230). She found that the governors' role in developing ethos was hard to discern, but their *'relationships*

both reflected and reinforced each schools distinctive ethos' (p.237). Her research suggests that although integrated schools support a higher level of governor involvement in oversight (p. 233), it was the principal who took the lead in developing and maintaining ethos, with the governors respecting and supporting this position (p.237).

Contentious matters.

Perhaps surprisingly, after 25 years, there is still no agreed understanding of what constitutes an integrated ethos within the integrated movement. Montgomery et al's research (2003) found that teachers in integrated schools recognised three qualitatively distinctive models of integration operating in schools ranging from passive through reactive to proactive models. McGlynn's later research highlighted five potential models.

> *'Approaches to integration constituted five main categories, namely, liberal, plural, critical, liberal-plural, and liberal-critical, of which two categories were further self-divided [*liberal pro-active and liberal passive*]'. (2009, p.14)*

These models were not hermetically sealed and can, and do, co-exist in some schools (McGlynn, 2007).

In Northern Ireland there are many symbols and emblems which have become totemic for both communities (Donnelly, 2004b, p.270) and research suggests that integrated schools have no single approach to dealing with them. One example is the wearing and selling of poppies, which has become an issue of public debate linked as it is to the British armed forces. This debate has had its impact on integrated schools, with some schools allowing their sale while others ban poppies. Some schools appear to offer space to discuss the matter, while others feel it is too controversial (Loughrey et al, 2003, p.4). Similarly there have been issues surrounding the wearing of football shirts, yet another area which presents problems for schools as certain football teams are identified with one community or another (Rangers, Protestant and Celtic, Catholic for example). Practice varied in integrated schools with some having policies, some ignoring the matter, while others banned the wearing of the more contentious tops, yet others some permitted any shirt to be worn (ibid, p.44).

Although McGlynn (2004) observed that integrated principals believed that an integrated ethos was the main vehicle through which schools promoted tolerance and

respect for diversity, few integrated primary schools had formal policies on the contentious matter of flags, symbols and emblems (Montgomery et al, 2003, p.27). In the absence of policies, the majority of principals relied on the '*common sense of staff*' in dealing with difficult issues. This reactive approach appeared to be reflective of the informal style of principals, with no evidence of avoidance on the part of the principals. The study did find, however, that amongst themselves, teachers often avoided discussions on contentious matters (ibid, p.21).

The integrated ethos is outworked beyond the taught curriculum and many integrated schools have used extra-curricular opportunities to promote sharing within the context of their whole school ethos. Loughrey et al (2003) identified that many GMI schools played Gaelic games, used Irish music and had links to Irish language centres (p.36). Many integrated schools used daily assemblies as opportunities to promote a variety of religious expression and multi-faith traditions, and some held focus days and seminars on Christian unity, including discussions on mixed marriages (p.37).

The role of teachers.

In terms of classroom ethos, teachers play a key role in promoting collaborative dialogue in the classroom (Webb, 2009). Indeed, Donnelly's research (2004b) suggests that teachers *'are ultimately responsible for transmitting inclusive values and contributing to an ethos which champions the richness of culture and social diversity'* (p.265). It is when teachers are in accord with the schools values that they can best assist in the development of a more inclusive ethos through enacting that ethos in their everyday work and relationships (p.265). This is best delivered and supported when divisive issues are faced and actively discussed. To this end some schools used opportunities in the curriculum to explain the differences between the two main traditions (Loughrey et al, 2003, p.42).

Although the principals interviewed by McGlynn (2004) agreed that the development and promotion of this ethos was something with which they expected teachers would engage directly during the school day, Donnelly (2004b) found that teachers in one integrated college felt that they had little role in developing an ethos of tolerance or respect, something they believed was a task performed by the principal, or history, or religion teachers.

Loughrey et al (2003) suggested that many principals and teachers (albeit more common in GMI schools) wished to move beyond passive tolerance of difference, but also highlighted the fact that teachers were divided on their role in proactively

addressing difference and dealing with difficult issues such as terrorist bombings or Orange marches associated with the Protestant-Unionist community (p.42). Indeed Donnelly's research into one integrated school, found that teachers tended to be complacent about addressing hard issues (2004b, p.271) and consequently avoided such discussions with their peers from the 'other' tradition (p.273) and in the classroom (p.274). She also found that some teachers had developed ways of avoiding discussion of issues which might '*cause heated debate*' in class (ibid, p.272). The use of avoidance strategies by teachers, in order not to address these issues, reflected the findings of Liechty and Clegg (2001) in their discussions on '*polite sectarianism*'. Smith and Robinson (1996) suggested that some of this avoidance might be linked to a lack of institutional support and training (Niens and Cairns, 2004, p.341), a fact which McGlynn considers also can limit how management oversee and develop the intergroup contact process (2007). Hughes adds that it might also be connected to the lack of preparedness due to the largely separated nature of teacher training and the fact that teachers are themselves products of a divided society (2011, p.845).

Despite these caveats, McGlynn's pupil cohort study (2003) indicated that pupils from integrated schools did believe that their teachers had a *'clear commitment to engage in dialogue around issues of religious, cultural and political diversity*' (p.17).

Ethos is fluid.

The integrated movement has always believed that school ethos was not a fixed phenomenon and, therefore, could change. Indeed, this is evidenced in the transformation legislation which allows a school to change from one management type to another, a process predicated on the understanding that transforming schools need actively to change how they develop a culture of respect, trust and tolerance. McGonigle et al's findings from research on the transformation process confirms this view, indicating that it is possible to transform the ethos of a non-integrated school into one which is genuinely integrated, provided certain requirements are met (2003). Whitehead observed that this was a difficult process, adding that *'there can be little doubt that setting out to change a culture (ethos) is harder than creating one from scratch*' (2006, p.14).

Christian ethos in Integrated schools.

The Christian element of integrated ethos has a long history, from its beginnings in the 1970's with ACT, through the NICIE statement of Principles (1989), to more recent times, with the revised NICIE Statement of Principles (NICIE, 2010). '*Faith*

and Values' remains one of the four core principles included in the Statement with schools required to '*provide a Christian based rather than a secular approach*' (p.2). This position drew support from the principals of two integrated schools, Flanagan and Lambkin in 1993, when they affirmed the need to support a Christian basis, while expressing fears that unless handled appropriately integrated education could dilute religious faith (Moffat et al, 1993).

The Christian emphasis should not be surprising, as the integrated movement was established by parents who came from a strong Christian tradition (Bardon, 2009), ACT, and so the first school founded, Lagan College in 1981, promoted a Christian rather than a secular approach to education. ACT's submission to the Opsahl Commission confirms this principle when it decried '*a vaguely Christian or wholly secular integrated education system*' and argued that it should have '*shared religious education*' at its core (Pollak, 1993, p.369). Just over ten years after Lagan College was established Osborne et al reflected that,

> *'all the new integrated schools claim to have a religious ethos and all the evidence is that this claim is true. So there now exists a set of religious schools in Northern Ireland for which none of the churches has any responsibility. In the light of the history of schooling, this is a deeply ironical development'. (Osborne et al, 1993, p.29)*

McAleavey et al (2009, p.553) and Smith (2001, p.566) also drew attention to the Christian nature of integrated schools linking it to the genesis of the movement in the strong faith commitments of the founding parents which Smith suggested reflected the Christian context of education in Northern Ireland (ibid, p.567). In the present, when integrated schools display a strong Christian ethos, this tends to be connected to the personal views of the principal (Macaulay, 2009, p.5).

Parents' views have differed over time on the significance of a Christian ethos. In 1993 a majority felt that integrated schools should have a Christian ethos and appeared to approve how integrated schools taught Religious Education, with few favouring a more secular approach (McEwen et al). In 1999, Fraser and Morgan suggested that the central role of a Christian ethos was not one unanimously held, concluding that,

> *'the debate over the extent to which the schools should be Christian in their ethos and how this should effect the attitude to the participation of teachers, parents and children of other religions and backgrounds or none... is producing a range of sharing options'. (p.79)*

In 2001 Smith observed that the Christian nature of integrated schools is perceived differently depending on the background of parents. Parents who hold strong Christian views tend to view the Christian basis as inter-denominational wherein Christianity is reflected intentionally in the ethos. Those parents who accept the place of spirituality in education see them as multi-denominational, where insights on all faiths are offered, while those who see religion as one element of a broader culture tend towards non-denominationalism, where religion is taught as a social phenomenon. O'Connor (2002) confirmed that this still remains an area of disagreement over two decades after the first integrated school was established, when she observed that '*there are shades of disagreement about the Christian centred-ness of the NICIE formula*' (p.116).

Teachers in Donnelly's research (2004b), appear to have taken a more complacent view of the Christian ethos, when they demonstrated a reluctance to discuss issues which differentiated the two main Christian traditions amongst themselves or with their pupils (p.276). Although Christian in ethos, integrated schools claim to be non-denominational and to embrace both the main Christian traditions in Northern Ireland. To this end, Loughrey et al highlighted the fact that all integrated schools gave serious consideration to the religious education of Catholic children (2003, p.38). This was addressed in a variety of ways with most schools choosing to teach all children together for Religious Education (RE), but to allow for the withdrawal of Catholic children for denominational instruction and sacramental preparation. They highlighted the fact that the only group to withdraw from RE entirely were those from a Jehovah Witness background (p.38). Obtaining the visible support of the local Catholic parish priest remained a difficulty and most Catholic clergy showed reluctance to identify openly with the schools by attending and taking part in the school day.

Loughrey et al (2003)suggest that schools normally attempted to involve all pupils at some level with the sacrament of first communion, which '*was celebrated as a momentous occasion during school assemblies or at a specially organised party*' (p.39). Catholic celebrations were not always so carefully handled as Donnelly's research highlighted, when Catholic children demonstrated a reluctance to publicly take the ash at a school's Ash Wednesday event (2004b, p.275). In this context, the teachers appeared neither to have discussed the celebration amongst themselves, nor considered the implications for Catholic children of having to take such a visible stand for their faith in front of their peers from the other tradition.

The intentionality towards embracing Catholicism has led to some concerns about how much Protestant faith traditions are reflected in an integrated ethos. In 2002, Coombs (2002) suggested that an integrated ethos might be more successful in supporting a Catholic faith development than the multiplicity of Protestant denominational faith expressions, perhaps because the very fact of multiplicity leads to a lack of agreed focus (cited in McGlynn et al, 2004, p.158). Marriott (2001) agreed and observed that '*the trouble with celebrating both traditions is that we have no way of celebrating Protestantism*' (p.12). This point was confirmed in research carried out by Loughrey et al (2003), when the contrast between the visible Catholic ethos was set against a perceived Protestant deficit (p.37).

Just after Lagan College opened, Titley reflected that although '*integrated schools were based on a Christian ethos...they welcome other faiths, religions and children of no religion*' (1983, p.96), a claim supported in Loughrey et al's research which observed that some GMI schools used assemblies to promote other faith traditions and cultures (2003, p.37). In the light of the growth of new communities, however, Smith raised the question of how a Christian ethos could address an increasingly multi-faith society (p.566), a concern also raised by McGlynn who observed that while they,

> *'may uniquely nurture children in their faith and provide for cultural and religious continuity between the generations ...concerns exist about the fragmentation of society that this might inadvertently create'.* (2005, p.58)

Despite this caveat, McGlynn (2003) accepted that '*integrated schools appear to be not only multicultural...but also intercultural*' (p.21) in their approach. A few years later Macaulay (2009) found that the majority of integrated schools believed that their Christian ethos (p.5) was inclusive and could embrace other faiths and none.

Key issues emerging.

In this chapter, the concept and nature of ethos has been discussed, considering a variety of definitions of the term including a review of relevant research literature, reflecting on the emerging themes. The nature and development of a distinctively integrated ethos has been examined, together with a consideration of how the Christian element of that ethos is understood.

Questions remain concerning how this ethos can be differentiated as specifically 'integrated', and how that ethos can celebrate the two traditions equally in the light of a perceived Protestant deficit. There are also issues surrounding the role of governors, principals and teachers in stewarding the ethos and how this ethos deals with contentious issues.

A significant question has been raised. This relates to how the existing integrated model which is predicated on maintaining a balanced intake of the two main Christian traditions, can deal proactively with ongoing integration in the face of a growing number of new communities (McGlynn, 2003) and faith traditions.
In summary, the literature review exposes a number of key gaps in the literature relating to the ethos embraced by integrated schools which sets the context for the research which follows.

1) There is no consistent view/perspective on what comprises an integrated ethos.
2) There is no consistency regarding the issue of how that ethos is created, stewarded, measured and practised in integrated schools.
3) The way in which integrated schools understand the Christian component of ethos is under-researched.
4) Little research exits on how an integrated ethos might deal with other traditions and other faiths.
5) The manifestation of a Christian ethos in different school types has not previously been considered.

The next chapter will present the methodology used in undertaking the research which will attempt to address some of these gaps.

Chapter 4. Methodology.

This chapter will discuss the rationale and purpose, research methods, design, instruments, the data collection process including problems encountered, validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

Rationale and Purpose.

The research was directed by the following two research questions.

1) To explore how key stakeholders in integrated schools understand an integrated ethos and its application in practice.

2) To explore whether there is an aspect of this integrated ethos which might be described as a 'Christian ethos' and, if so, how that is reflected in school life, including whether or not it is perceived and applied differently between controlled and grant-maintained integrated schools.

The review of research evidence drawn from existing literature revealed a number of gaps relating to integrated ethos which informed the context for the research which follows. In summary the review highlighted the fact that there was no consistent view/perspective on what comprises an integrated ethos, that there is no consistency regarding the issue of how ethos is created, stewarded, measured and practised in integrated schools, that the way in which integrated schools understand the Christian component of ethos is under-researched, and that the manifestation of a Christian ethos in different school types has not previously been considered.

Research methods considered.

Perhaps the most significant question in choosing a research method is whether it is '*fit for purpose*' (Cohen et al, 2003, p.73). This does not mean that there is an '*appropriate fit between epistemological position and method*' (Bryman, 1998, p.140), but rather, '*whether there is an appropriate fit between the research problem and method*' (ibid, p.140). Any method chosen must be able to get to the heart of the research issue and provide an appropriate (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), reliable and verifiable vehicle, by which that research question may be interrogated.

In order to set the methodology in context, the design of the research was informed by the following four step model suggested by Crotty (1998).

a) What epistemology informs the theoretical perspective?

b) What theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology in question?

c) What methodology governs the choice and use of the methods?

d) What methods do we propose to use?

In determining the epistemology, the author understood this to relate to assumptions made about knowledge and how it might be obtained (Lichtman, 2013) or '*one's assumption about how to know the social and ascertain its meaning*' (Fonow and Cook, 1991, p.1). In this research, the knowledge being sought linked into exchanges and relationships which take place within school communities and, therefore, focused on the relationship between the '*knower*' and what can be known (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

As the research was exploratory in nature, aimed at uncovering the interpretation and application of ethos amongst stakeholders in different school types, the emphasis was on subjective understanding and '*thick descriptions*' (Geertz,1973) and for these reasons, the approach adopted was qualitative (Cohen et al, 2003, p.139).

Most discussions surrounding qualitative and quantitative research methodologies involve the perceived differences in the epistemological predicates of the two approaches and the resultant research strategies for data collection (Clough and Nutbrown, 2006, p.15). The debate becomes entrenched when, at best, one research approach is seen to exclude the other, or, at worst, one approach is perceived as better (Stake, 1995, p.101), or more 'scientific', than the other. Halfpenny (1979) summarises one key element of this classic debate in observing that qualitative methods are often considered '*soft subjective and speculative*', while quantitative research is seen as '*hard objective and rigorous*' (p.799). This deliberation has had a considerable history (Burgess, 1985, p.2) and is an area of academic dialogue which is unlikely to diminish despite its longevity (Bryman, 1998, p.139).

In general terms, there are two broad philosophical traditions informing qualitative and quantitative research approaches, positivism and anti-positivism. Quantitative research is generally linked to what might be termed a positivist, natural science approach to understanding the character of the social world (ibid, p.139), which derives from enlightenment thinking and the emergence of what might be termed modern scientific enquiry. In a positivist context, where it is accepted that there is a natural, external, objective nature to areas of social interaction, it follows that

quantitative research has to do with the collection of empirical data and precise measurement, emphasising causality, generalisation, replication and individualism (Silverman, 2004, p.4). So, based on a notion of general law, quantitative research tests a theory, using empirically based methods of data collection and analysis, and adds to the objective body of knowledge of how things work, through the results of those findings. Because it has to do with ideas of predictive certainty, based on the positivist approach of natural science, quantitative research uses methods which are capable of objective data capture and measurement.

If, however, it is accepted that social interactions can be random and often occur when specific, existential choices are made by individuals (Kirk and Miller,1986, p.10), then a less positivist, more qualitative method might be a more appropriate way of capturing those interactions. Indeed, it could be argued that such methods best suit a process which aims to interpret a set of social interactions, within their specific contexts. Qualitative research, unlike the positivism on which quantitative research is predicated, is linked instead to a philosophical attestation which rejects the notion of an objectively measurable social world and is, instead, based upon epistemological principles, developed from anti-positivist traditions (Silverman, 2004, p.8). Such a theory of social interaction approaches the social world as a subjective, relativist construct, which changes, indeed, is in a constant state of flux, and so its focus is on understanding the nature of social interaction, informed through the perspective of those people resident in those social situations. It is often termed naturalistic, ethnographic or participatory (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p.9) as against quantitative research which is mostly perceived as scientific, empirical and objective. It holds the premise that life involves connectivity and that interactions take place in space and time, with real people, in a multiplicity of circumstances and, therefore, involves subjectivity and elements of randomness.

Stake suggests that while quantitative researchers look for explanation and control, qualitative researchers, in attempting to understand complex inter-relationships (1995, p.37), are, in effect, involved in a quest for an understanding of human experiences, rather than a search for a cause and effect event (ibid, p.38).

Qualitative research can be seen as less theory-based and more concerned with specific relative events which occur in real time, involving social connections and interactions made by real people (Burgess, 1985, p.3). It deals with how people

interpret the world and events that take place in specific situations involving people. Qualitative research has been considered to be opinion dressed up as science and, given such a view, qualitative researchers might arguably consider that their work is held to be of a lesser value or significance than that of their quantitative counterparts (Silverman, 2004, p.2).

If it is accepted that methods of data collection are intrinsically linked to a particular epistemology, it can be argued that the consequent methods of research cannot be neutral (Bryman, 1998, p.140), as they are drawn from two fundamentally different approaches to how social worlds are to be understood and interpreted. In addition, Bryman has added to this debate by suggesting that it is not simply the methods which differ but that the two approaches might present different '*rhetorics of persuasion*' (ibid, p.155). Indeed, if such a separatist understanding is adopted, then the two methods can neither be reconciled nor integrated (Smith and Heshusius, 1986, p.4). Research carried out by Platt (1985), and Bryman (1998, pp.131-152), however, suggest that the reality is not so stark, and that research methods are often chosen for more pragmatic reasons than simply as a consequence of a particular epistemology. Indeed, it could be argued that such approaches can complement one another as the epistemologies that inform them are not mutually exclusive. Qualitative researchers generally accept that relationships between social actions can in some way be measured and that values and beliefs which underpin such social actions are not readily accessible through the use of surveys, but require more flexible data collection methods. Thus hybrids can, and do exist (Hammersley, 1992).

In this research, it was not the intention to test a theory, to uncover an objective truth or reality (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p.11) which could be replicated in other situations, or produce a piece of research which could be generalised for the integrated movement as a whole. In other words, cases were not being used to understand other cases (Stake, 1995, p.4). The research was interested in developing an understanding of how ethos was understood, experienced and mediated in specific, mature school environments. It was anticipated that by using the data to reflect on existing theory the findings would contribute to the research evidence regarding the distinctive nature of integrated schools. However, as the key focus was to uncover the attitudes of school communities to ethos and their understanding as to how it was interpreted in school environments, there was less concern with issues of generality and cause

and effect. The subject of research was school-based ethos, which is at heart a socially constructed phenomenon and, to this end, the research methodology needed to be able to capture rich social, attitudinal data, which is more subjective and narrative in its nature. In considering the research method, the author approached qualitative research as contextual research which has to do *'with depth rather than breadth'* and which aims to learn '*about how and why people, think behave and make meaning of what they do*' (Ambert et al, 1995, p.880). It studies things as they exist (Lichtman, 2013, p.21) dealing more with the realm of discovery than verification (Ambert et al, 1995) as it '*describes, understands and interprets human phenomenon, human interaction or human discourse*' (Lichtman, 2013, p.17).

In this context, it was the writer's belief that a qualitative methodology was best suited for what was effectively a phenomenological study (ibid, p.83), considering people in '*lived experiences*' (p.87). This approach offered the potential to be appropriately focused (Silverman, 2004, p.11) and presented as a best fit for the subject matter to be researched (Cohen et al, 2003, p.73).

It is accepted that it is neither the method nor the research technique that determines whether or not something is qualitative research, but it is how the study is conceived, what it is to accomplish and how the data is understood (Just and Nilakanta, 2007). As the research's primary interest was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Ambert et al, 1995) surrounding ethos in practice in integrated schools, rather than pursuing a chronology of cause and effect (Stake, 1995, p.39), the writer concluded that case studies offered the best potential for analysing school's individual characteristics and values (Donnelly, 2000, p.138). This was based on the understanding that as the purpose of the research was to '*portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations though accessible accounts*' (Cohen et al, 2003, p.79) in schools, a case study was considered to be an appropriate medium. Not only do schools fit the definition of a 'case' in Stake (1994) and Lichtman (2013, p.92), but as the research questions related to interactions between people in every day relationships, a case study provided a good method by which to carry out an empirical enquiry which *'investigates a phenomenon in depth within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*' (Johnston, 1994, p.20). A case study was also considered appropriate, as the focus was not on the source of the data *per se,* but was an '*attempt to document the story of a naturalistic-experiment-in-action'* (Freebody, 2003, p.82).

It was considered, therefore, that an instrumental, case study strategy where '*a particular case is examined to give insight into an issue*' (Stake, 1995), would best enable the understanding of how an integrated ethos is experienced as a lived reality (Donnelly, 2000, p.138), within real time, in two schools and from that research to draw some conclusions for further study. In addition, at an external level, current government-recommended practice on qualitative research suggests that this approach can produce an '*in-depth understanding that is holistic, comprehensive and contextualised*' (Cabinet Office, 2004, p.37). It was important to apply appropriate rigour when proceeding with this methodology and to this end, the five steps laid down by Freebody were considered appropriate to pursue (2003, p.83). They are: define research question, design cases and data collection methods, collect data, analyse data, report findings.

A description of the case-study sites follows, as well as an account of how the research instruments were chosen and used.

Research design.

The following is a short description of the two sites.

Case study sites.

Integrated education has been in existence since 1981 with the establishment of Lagan College. At the start of September 2009, there were 61 integrated schools broken down into two distinct categories, grant-maintained (GMI) (38) and controlled (Transformed) (23). Of the 61 schools, 16 came into existence in the first decade (1981-1991) and 11 were created since 2004. The majority emerged in the period 1992-2003. In terms of location and type, 47 are rural and 14 urban (Greater Belfast and Londonderry/Derry) with 20 colleges and 41 primaries. The characteristics represented in Table 1 (overleaf) therefore are types of integrated school, location, length of time established and school sector.

As the research was qualitative and based on a case study approach, one school from each category was selected, controlled integrated and GMI, in order to see if schools which transform to integrated status take a different approach to the development of an integrated ethos to those set up specifically as 'new- build' integrated schools (Marriott, 2001). As Christian ethos is perhaps more visibly obvious in primary schools where Catholic children are commonly prepared for the

sacraments and arguably less discernible at post-primary level, primary schools were chosen for the case studies.

In order to ensure as far as possible comparative case studies, two schools were chosen both of which have been integrated for over five years, as this is the point at which the Department of Education will carry out its first transformation inspection following a school's accession to integrated status. For the purpose of consistency, schools which are both urban and which have had a principal in post for over a year were chosen for the study.

date created	category	Urban Primary	Urban college	Rural Primary	Rural College	Total
2004-9	Newer schools GMI	0	0	4	1	5
2004-9	Newer schools controlled	1	0	3	2	6
1981-91	Older schools GMI	2	2	8	0	12
1981-91	Older schools controlled	1	0	2	1	4
1992-2003	Remaining schools GMI	4	2	5	10	21
1992-2003	Remaining schools controlled	1	1	10	1	13
	Totals	9	5	32	15	61

Table 4.1 Breakdown of Integrated Schools.

Research Instruments.

As the literature review signalled the significance of the school plant, the curriculum, classroom practice and policies and procedures in reflecting school ethos (McLaughlin, 2005, p.321), it was important to ensure these areas were also

captured during the research. In terms of the physical plant, following Yin (2009, p.101ff) in considering the sources of evidence it was decided to examine documents including archive records and to carry out site-visits, including examination of physical artefacts and direct observation of the site. Two one-day, ethos audits were carried out using observation methods during those visits. The researcher also attended a board meeting and observed an assembly at each school. These multiple sites of data collection allowed for *'converging lines of enquiry'* to be followed (ibid, p.113) thus strengthening the conclusions through triangulation across multiple data sources (Silverman, 2004, p.99; Creswell and Miller, 2000, p.126).

In order to ensure maximum data capture, key documents of both schools were considered, including prospectuses, policies, procedures, board minutes, public relations material, web-sites and press releases examining references to school ethos. The relevant references were noted in hard copy, under three headings: school ethos, integrated ethos and Christian ethos.

The main method of data collection for the school members was a series of interviews, as '*interviewing is often important if one needs to know what a set of people think, or how they interpret an event or series of events, or what they have done or are planning to do*' (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, p.673). Interviews are also useful to allow access to areas not capable of observation (Burgess, 2000, p.107). While it is recognised that '*interviews are no more authentic or pure a reflection of the self than any other socially organized set of practices*' (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997, p.322) they can offer insights into the socially constructed worlds of individuals (Silverman, 1993). They are also interactional events in which the questions form the basis for the discussion and interactions which follow (Freebody, 2003, p.137).

As the literature review highlighted the role played by principals, governors and teachers in developing and sustaining ethos (Burgess, 2005), it was important that the research instruments were appropriate to capture data from all three sources. The principal and chairperson of each school were chosen to be interviewed on a one-to-one basis (Clough and Nutbrown, 2006, p.102) because as leaders of the school they have a key role in stewarding ethos (Fraser and Morgan, 1999).

One-to-one interviews allowed an iterative dialogue to develop with the researcher and for the use of probing questions. As the case studies took place over a period of

six months, it was necessary to maintain regular contact with the principal to ensure that the process flowed without difficulty. During this process one interview took place with both chairpersons, while three one-to-one interviews took place with both principals, at the beginning, midpoint and end of the case study. This provided the opportunity to explore any issues or inconsistencies which arose during the research as the data accumulated over the time period.

The literature review also pointed to the role of teachers and governors in stewarding ethos and in order to obtain a broad view of school stakeholders and to ensure the collection of data from as many participants as possible, two focus groups per school were set up. Focus groups are effectively a group interview or '*organised discussion*' (Kitzinger, 1994), which offer a time saving approach given that a number of individuals can be interviewed at once. Their nature allows for a dynamic to be created between participants and offers the researcher access to the process of how meaning is being socially constructed in the lived experience of the school. They form a useful tool in drawing out themes *'that derive from the insights and data [*emerging*] from the group*' (Cohen et al, 2003, p.288) and a useful basis for following up issues raised with other groups in the school. They also allowed for optimum group interaction wherein individuals were able not only to share their own thoughts and ideas, but were also able to enter into discussions on themes raised by others (Lichtman, 2013, p.207) during the group process (Clough and Nutbrown, 2006, p.79).

In choosing the groups and individuals (Lichtman, 2013, p.208) it was decided to establish one focus group of staff and one of governors (Vaughn et al, 1996) per school, each containing a minimum of five members.

As this was a phenomenological study, criterion-based, judgement sampling was used and, to this end, selected focus groups were undertaken, made up from key people drawn from different areas of school life, the teaching staff (Senior Management Team and others) the support staff and governors. The constitution of both focus groups was given over to the principal to decide, based on the criteria that they included a range of experiences and ages, both genders and those from both main Christian traditions, as well as others. The importance of ensuring a representative cross-section of staff was discussed with the principal who selected members to reflect the variables of time working at the school, gender and community balance (Protestant/Catholic). The balance was checked by the author at

the focus group.The staff members were chosen because they hold positions from which they both experience and mediate ethos. The governors were chosen because as trustees of the school they oversee strategic development and are custodians of the values and ethos of the school. In the case of the grant-maintained school, six of the sixteen governors were 'foundation governors', whose role it is to steward the integrated ethos.

Inherent in handing over this responsibility to the principals was the potential risk that they might select staff reflecting one view point. During the group discourse, however, it became clear that there was a wide variety of views on integrated ethos. The board sample included some parent governors and some foundation governors from the GMI school.

Semi-structured interviews (Cohen et al, 2003, p.146), were chosen as the method of eliciting discussion during all interviews in both case studies. A series of broad, core questions were developed, linked to the research area and used as starting points for the group discussion. This allowed for '*latitude in the breadth of relevance*' (Freebody, 2003, p.133). The core questions were used to elicit some general responses but permitted a more free-ranging discourse to take place between members. This allowed for the area covered by the research to be discussed using a number of open-ended questions (ibid, p.271). The lead questions were designed prior to the visit and included some based on the initial findings from the desk-based research and observational audits. The possibility of using some probing questions was considered as well (Fielding and Thomas, 2001, pp.128-9). The purpose of probes during research interviews is to seek additional information, requesting the person to amplify their answers or to go deeper. Using probing questions assists in increasing understanding as many people need encouragement to go beyond initial responses in order to source their underlying opinions (Cohen et al, 2003).

The subjects raised in the interviews covered the same broad ground with both principals and both chairs, as well as all focus group members. Copies of the questions are contained in appendices.

The researcher wrote to the principal and chair of each school detailing the research and its purpose, together with the rationale which underlay the choice of the school as a case study site. As it is important and ethically essentially to obtain permission, the letter requested permission for the researcher to be afforded access to the school

during a three-month period during which the data would be collected. The data collection methods were outlined and it was made clear that no access would be needed to children, so safeguarding issues did not arise. The researcher requested written confirmation of the approval and details of the contact person. This was received in both cases. All visits were arranged in advance of that appointment to ensure all ethical requirements were met.

Research schedule.

Research area	Content	Time/events
Printed and electronic school promotional material	School policies, prospectuses, board minutes, web site, variety of press and PR materials	A period of 3 months prior to the site visits and interviews
School-based audit	Appendix 5	One half day visit per school
Board meeting	Presentation at start and observation of first part of meeting.	One visit to one board meeting per case
Assembly	Observation of assembly taken by staff or outside member	One visit per school
Interview with principals	One-to-one interview with principal	Three, one-hour interviews at the beginning, middle and end of case study with each principal.
Interview with chairs	One-to-one interview with principal	One-hour interview at the start of the case study
Focus group with staff	One focus group with selection of teachers and other staff	One 90-minute focus group interview
Focus group with board	One focus group with selection of board members	One 90-minute focus group interview

Data Collection and analysis.

Research using written and recorded material.

The literature revealed that ethos is often represented or reflected in and through the material and images which are currently being presented by schools including the medium of its printed and verbal materials, private as well as public, solicited as well

as unsolicited (Stake, 1995). Accordingly, school documents were reviewed as they can often '*serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly*' (ibid, p.68).

In terms of scrutinising written documents, the methodology used involved the creation of a check-list of areas which would best reflect ethos and values. In examining this documentary evidence, explicit as well as implicit references to values were logged in addition to references to principles, culture and ethos and any stories, pictures and images used to promote that ethos. Examples of such areas were prospectuses, statements of principle, school policies, web sites and promotional materials. In terms of the use of pictures and images, the type of image and text used to accompany the schools' promotional literature and relevant external documents including web sites were examined. This included such elements as strap line, logos, pictures and text.

The nature of the picture/image or terminology used was considered (including terms such as 'integrated', 'inclusive' ,'all ability', 'child centred', 'essentially Christian in character', 'offering a Christian rather than a secular approach to education'), and the principles highlighted (such as Equity, Diversity and Interdependence, community relations, good relations). Examples of the use of these terms were noted against the documents and literature examined, and the results were collated under a series of headings as they emerged from the analysis.

Observation.

In order to examine how ethos was understood and mediated consciously and unconsciously within the schools (McLaughlin, 2005), an audit of the building including the visible images and symbols was carried out. This was done through a structured, '*ethos audit*' (Cohen et al, 2003, p.306) of the school buildings, examining the visual culture/ethos, which was recorded onto a data-base with supporting photographic evidence. In view of time restrictions, this included two of the nine major areas of social dimension (Spradley, 1979), '*Space*' and '*Objects*' , including pictures, signs, layout of office, wall displays classrooms, notice boards and general decoration. This audit was carried out over a one-day period using a pre-determined check-list and included photographic evidence.

This list and photographic evidence recorded the external and internal layout of the building and the offices from the entrance hall through the reception and into the other areas, including classrooms and staff room. It examined the reception area listing the visual symbols on display to visitors as well as the signage, layout and

seating arrangements. Common offices were examined and again the layout and visual symbols were recorded.

The observations were recorded using a digital camera and hand-written, field notes were made on an observational prompt list. The images were then gathered together and grouped into the following school areas: classrooms, library, assembly hall, common areas, staff room, principal's office and exterior. The images were then examined to draw out recurrent images or representations of ethos including, children's pictures, children's work, international elements, language, religious images/texts, wall displays, formally integrated statements/images, anti- bullying areas, welcoming statements, flags and emblems. These images were noted and recorded, including key words used, recurrence and place.

As part of the observational audit, an arrangement was made for the researcher to attend both boards. This was welcomed by governors and allowed an opportunity to present in person the outline of the research and answer any questions which arose. It also provided an opportunity to observe the boards *in situ*. After the board meetings, a brief set of field notes were recorded, noting any relevant discussion topics, aligned to the key themes included in the focus group interviews.

An arrangement was also made to attend an assembly at both schools where a brief set of field notes was taken, reflecting on the Christian focus and content of the assembly.

One-to-one interviews.

The principals were interviewed on three occasions, at the beginning to agree the process and gather some initial data, during the process in order to discuss the progress and reflect on the initial research findings and themes, and at the end in order to identify any issues which arose during the research. The chairpersons were interviewed once each, with the offer made to both during the interview, to request a second meeting if they wished to offer any further reflections or observations. In the event this was not taken up by either person.

All interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach, based on a series of general questions which were addressed to participants on key themes which had emerged from the literature review. These included how the participants understood ethos, particularly how they understood and described an integrated ethos and a Christian ethos in terms of their own experiences. Questions were also framed to address how participants understood ethos was created, developed and stewarded

and the respective roles of governors and staff and the principal in this process. They included what participants felt about the ability of an integrated ethos to support a multi-faith environment. They were recorded with the participants consent and handwritten notes were also taken during the interview. The interviews took place in the principal's office or a side room to ensure privacy.

All interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions were then annotated to reference the key themes, key quotes, areas for further discussion or clarity and areas to be further discussed or followed up with the principal. The key themes were then gathered from the transcriptions and collated. The data that was capable of triangulation was then cross-checked.

Focus groups.

Semi-structured interviews were used in order to facilitate exploration of a subjective understanding of issues relating to how the schools comprehend ethos. A set of core questions had been drawn up and this was used to start the discussion in each group (see Appendices 1 - 4). The possibility of allowing for probing questions had been built in and this became a useful tool when the discussions were taking place. The process with staff and board included allowing space to discuss what ethos was, including a specifically Christian ethos, how it is understood and promoted verbally and in non-verbal forms, who are considered to be the main creators and sustainers of ethos, how that ethos is mediated and accepted or refuted, and the place of individuals within the school system relating to maintaining and promoting its ethos.

The four focus groups, drawn from staff and governors at each school, took place on the school premises in a side room.

Validity.

Construct Validity.

In any qualitative research there is the inherent danger of a few well chosen examples being presented to represent one particular view (Silverman, 1993) which can lead to questioning of the validity of the research. In order to address this issue, multiple strategies or methods were chosen in an attempt to triangulate the findings and to better validate the data (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p.30). In this context, the combination of observation, one-to-one and focus group interviews, alongside the desk analysis of school materials and printed information, provided multiple sources of data. The semi-structured interviews were all recorded and transcribed over a period of two months, after which return visits to the schools had been arranged,

allowing for any issues or inconsistencies which arose to be further discussed and clarified if necessary (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In the event there were no major inconsistencies.

There was a midpoint meeting with the principals following the focus groups and audit, when initial observations and findings were discussed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.314) and any inconsistent interpretations were explored. At the end of the case studies, a draft report was sent to the principals to ensure that factual details were correct and any amendments recorded.

Internal Validity.

As the study was mainly exploratory and not able to be generalised, there was a need to ensure that any inconsistencies were addressed (Cresswell and Miller, 2000, p.127), so that when certain actions were observed or certain descriptions of events heard, the analysis considered all relevant factors and alternative possibilities. In order to attempt to deal with this issue, which is an area that can cause considerable problems within a case study paradigm (ibid, p.43), two case study sites were chosen and the researcher cross-referenced the findings for patterns. Inconsistent explanations (ibid p.135) were considered in both cases and set both studies in the context of a theoretical, logic model.

Ethical Approval.

In carrying out this research, the regulations and guidelines as laid down by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) were followed. All those who were involved were advised of, '*the process in which they engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it would be used and how and to whom it will be reported*' (BERA, 2004, p.5) Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the School of Education, Queens University Belfast on 4 November 2009.

Ethical considerations: reflexivity.

Researchers play an important role in the process of qualitative research '*as data is constructed, information is gathered, settings are viewed and realities are constructed through his or her eyes and ears*' (Lichtman, 2013, p.21). Accordingly, '*research involving human participants starts from a position of ethical tension*' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.271) and is not value free, particularly in the case of qualitative research using case study and subjective data analysis and so '*it is better to give the reader a good look at the researcher*' (Stake,1995, p.95). As this research was concerned with assimilating data and observing settings and from this data

creating knowledge, the role of the author as researcher was of key importance in determining the research tools and methods.

Through the planning and implementation of the research the intention was to ensure the schools became *'participants in the research rather than subjects'* (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.271). Despite this intention, it was recognised that this outcome needed to be tested as the researcher, having spent 15 years working in the integrated sector, would have a bias (Lichtman, 2013, p 21). Indeed the reason for the subject choice was because of his prior involvement and interest and so the subjective nature of his role here needed to be faced and, as far as possible, mitigated, as pure objectivity is a fiction (Breuer et al, 2002). It is recognised also that no research is value free, and so it was important to consider the researcher's role and actions in the research process and '*subject these to the same critical scrutiny as the rest of [*his*] data*' (Mason,1996, p.6) through reflexive practice.

Reflexivity is '*a tool whereby we can include our 'selves' at any stage, making transparent the values and beliefs we hold that almost certainly influence the research process and its outcomes"* (Etherington, 2007, p.601). The researcher understands that reflexivity is not only related to research rigour, but has to do with ethics (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.275), as it relates not only to how data is collected, but also to how it is processed and interpreted over the period of the research process: '*It is a sensitizing notion that can enable ethical practice to occur in the complexity and richness of social research*' (ibid, p.278).

The research strategy was based on the researcher operating as the interviewer and observer for the ethos audit and board meetings only. On entering the process of engagement with the case study schools, the researcher was aware of two elements of his perceived and actual identity, that of the previous Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the body which oversees the development of integrated education, and that of a Protestant (Donnelly, 2004, p.268). These matters raised a series of ethical issues which needed to be addressed if the integrity of the researcher was to be maintained. They related to ethics in practice (Guillemin and Gillam, p.262) and link more to the '*ethically important moments*' (ibid, p.265) of micro-ethics rather than the procedures and approvals, which are, of course, also germane. They related to the role of the researcher as non-participant, passive-observer during the case studies (Stake, 1995, p.103).

In this context, a number of areas of concern were identified which are listed below, together with the action points which, it was hoped, addressed possible conflict or potential skew in the data collection.

1) The author was over 14 years with NICIE and in that time had been a key driver in developing a movement-wide brand for integrated education, including working with governors and staff in over 20 new schools. This included facilitating how those schools might reflect the principles underpinning integrated education in school practice and ethos. As the author previously held a position which operated within a perceived power structure (Etherington, 2007, p.614), there was the potential for this influence to be felt within the school communities. In addition, he was not unbiased in his understanding of, or more importantly in his overall aspiration for, the current and future development of the movement, including how schools understand and develop a sense of integrated ethos. As there was a danger that the researcher became an advocate (Stake, 1995, p.103), there was a need to ensure that his personal views were not brought to bear in any area of data collection where there would be a danger of the data being skewed.

   Therefore, consideration needed to be given to the potential for such bias in school- related data collection. This was addressed in the selection of the research tools, which involved the collection of information from multiple data sets (Lichtman, 2013, p.21) using a variety of methods (interviews, observations, desk based research). For example, as the author recognised that it is impossible to be an unobtrusive observer (ibid, p.77) and part of the data collection involved observation, the data from the observation was collected from the whole school premises through the use of pictures as well as field notes, which allowed for critical reflection to be carried out following site visits.

2) In certain settings in Northern Ireland, there can be a tendency to shun hard conversations and to avoid issues which might cause offence to those of another tradition (Donnelly, 2004, p.268). The author, as stated above, is a Protestant. As an active member of a large and disparate religious community in Northern Ireland which represents 'the majority tradition', the author was aware that he was privy to a number of assumptions, a range of traditions and a set of values/beliefs which was not associated with the perceived 'minority tradition'. As the interviews involved staff and board members from the two main traditions, the

author needed to be aware that relationships might be easier or more natural with fellow Protestants, who saw him as '*one of their own*' (Murray, 1985), than with those from a Catholic tradition who might not be so open. During the research the author remained cognisant that the insider's task in carrying out research in mixed tradition settings in Northern Ireland can be difficult, as being a member of either religious group involves one in being more aware of the values and norms of that specific group (Murray, 1985). The converse, however, is also true, in that the author was perhaps more able to understand some of the concerns expressed by Protestant staff during the focus groups (Donnelly, 2004b, p.268), on a perceived 'Protestant deficit'. In addition, as the researcher has an active involvement in a faith community and had studied theology, there was a particular prior understanding of what elements might be contained within a Christian ethos which needed to be the subject of ongoing reflexive practice (Lichtman, 2013, p.166).

3) As an observer who had operated daily in similar contexts, the researcher expected to see the familiar as well as the strange (Burgess, 2000, p.26). It was important, therefore, to ensure radical looking, that is '*the means by which research process makes the familiar strange and gaps in knowledge are revealed*' (Clough and Nutbrown, 2006, p.23) and radical listening '*as opposed to merely hearing – is the interpretative and critical means though which voice is noticed*' (ibid, p.24) remained core to the research.

4) The author was an influencer of as well as participant in developing an integrated ethos, including how this was reflected in working practice. There was therefore the possibility that this role might have had an impact on how he was perceived by the school community during the research. The writer reflected on how much prior contact there had been with either school during his period as CEO of NICIE, specifically related to ethos. During this period he had no contact with either principal or staff body relating directly to school ethos. In addition, the writer had never attended a governor meeting at either school and had not had any contact with the chairpersons of the governing bodies of either school. Indeed the governing body in each case had changed since he left NICIE, with new chairpersons in post. The writer had not visited either school in his role as CEO since 2004 with the exception of attending a community relations event in one in 2007. The lack of substantial prior contact reduced the possibility that his role as CEO might have had an effect on how he was treated during the

research.

5) The researcher had a particular relationship with a number of schools, which could potentially influence the way in which any questions might be answered in an open process. There was a need to remain objective enough to facilitate this area of the process and reduce the researcher influence. He believes that the choice of the methods and the multiple research tools reduced this potential influence. In addition, as already stated above, the prior contact had been minimal with the researcher having no prior engagement with any of the staff or governors involved in the process.

6) The author had been responsible for setting up a review of the NICIE Statement of Principles, part of which involved a summary evaluation of how schools understood the concept of an integrated ethos, including whether or not they should continue to subscribe to reflecting a '*Christian rather than a secular*' approach to education. The potential for any researcher influence in this area was reduced as the responses to the review were not school-specific and neither school had any direct contact with the author during this work as the detail was carried out by other NICIE staff.

Having considered the issues highlighted above, it was the author's view that his role as impartial researcher could be capable of being maintained and monitored in all areas, while facilitating an appropriate and balanced, but most importantly self-reflective, evaluative research process. During the case studies the nature of the author's previous role was not raised by anyone interviewed and no-one expressed reserve at being involved in interviews or focus groups with the researcher. In addition in his previous role the researcher had limited contact with either school over the five-year period prior to the research and had previously met only four of those interviewed. There was also the issue of role choice during the research (Stake, 1995, p.103) and the danger of becoming an advocate for the events rather than one who observes events, evaluates the data gathered and tells the resultant story, with any research conclusions appropriately evidenced. The researcher chose to pursue the role of passive observer and felt that this route offered a more objective approach, given the previous post held, and prior involvement with the schools.

Access and Confidentiality.

As schools would be involved in this research, permission for access visits was necessary (Cohen et al, 2003, p.53) and informed consent (ibid, 2003, p.50) for the interviews and focus groups was sought from the relevant authorities in the schools (principals and chairs for permission,, and staff and board members for consent). As no children or vulnerable adults were involved child protection issues were not raised. As the process was entirely voluntary, schools were offered the option to withdraw at any time during the process without giving a reason and without coercion or penalty.

Although interviews are artificially created situations (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.271), the researcher was nonetheless aware that it was those who are closest to the participants who are likely to recognise them (Walford, 2005, p.85). The case study schools are described with a minimum of detail to ensure maximum confidentiality and anonymity (ibid, p.61), but with enough information to allow the reader to understand the relationship between the different contexts and the research findings. One-to-one interviews and focus groups were pursued using an open-ended, semi-structured process, allowing time for discussion, review and feedback on the process, to ensure the interviewees were content with the issues discussed and with the facilitation and summing up of the process. Space was allowed for people to withdraw in the event that the interview moved into areas in which they were uncomfortable. No one did.

Reflections on the limitations of the research.

The role of the researcher.

As this research was concerned with assimilating data, observing settings and, from this data, creating knowledge, the role of the author as researcher was of key importance in determining the tools and methods. The researcher had spent 14 years in the integrated sector and the area of research was chosen because of that prior involvement and interest and so the subjective nature of the researcher's role needed to be faced and mitigated. In this regard, the issue of reflexivity has been considered detail already and accordingly those points will not be repeated. The researcher, however, remained very aware of his role as the previous Chief Executive Officer of the NICIE as well as his identity as a Protestant (Donnelly, 2004, p.268). He remained conscious of the need to ensure that his prior role and identity had limited

potential to influence the data collection and analysis. During the research no reference was made and no concerns were expressed in any of the interviews or focus groups relating to either identity.

The data set.

There was some initial difficulty in the selection of the case study schools as Greenlands and Hollybank were not the first choice. Despite that, as the methodology chapter outlined, they met the relevant criteria to become appropriate case studies. During the process no issues became apparent as a result of this selection difficulty.

There was an appropriate community and gender balance and experience contained within the staff focus groups in the two schools. In Hollybank all elements of the governing body were covered, but in Greenlands the transferor representatives did not take part, despite a number of overtures from the researcher. This was unfortunate as part of the research was examining the Christian nature of ethos. There did not appear to be a fundamental issue behind this lack of engagement which seemed to be more about timing than principle. However it is possible that missing this representation led to a less than full range of views from the board..

During the process, there were some minor problems with the schedule as both schools were operating a full weekly curriculum which meant that times and dates for the focus groups needed to be altered. For example, the data for the desk-based research came in a number of tranches rather than at one time, and one board meeting date had to be rearranged due to the nature of the business to be discussed at the original date. Meetings set up for the principals had to be changed on several occasions due to busy calendars and *in extremis*, in one school, an extra meeting for one focus group had to be set up to ensure the full range of teachers and staff were involved, as the original group convened, was two persons short

Time.

The research took place over one year with agreed slots of time during that period for the focus groups. Each focus group had been allocated a certain length of time to allow for maximum involvement and engagement. During the discussions, some issues arose which would have been very useful to have followed up had more time been available. These have been highlighted where appropriate.

Case studies.

In this research, it was not the intention to test a theory, to uncover an objective truth or reality (Kirk and Miller, 1986, p.11) which could be replicated in other situations, or produce a piece of research which could be generalised for the integrated movement as a whole. In other words, cases are not being used to understand other cases (Stake, 1995, p.4). The research was, instead, specifically interested in developing an understanding of how ethos was interpreted in specific, mature school environments. It was anticipated that by using the data to reflect on existing theory, the findings would contribute to the research evidence regarding the distinctive nature of integrated schools. However as the key focus was to uncover the attitudes of school communities to ethos and their understanding as to how it is experienced and mediated in school environments there was less concern with issues of generality and cause and effect.

Summary.

The researcher wished to explore how the integrated ethos and particularly a Christian ethos was understood, experienced, evidenced and lived in everyday school life. The methodology chosen reflected the nature of the research and allowed for the maximum possible capture of rich data.

In addition, it is recognised that the case studies involved obtaining opinions of people at a specific period of time and that as '*opinions are formed over a period of time in the light of personal experience*' (Montgomery et al, 2003, p.16), those opinions are valid for the time at which they are collected. The researcher was particularly aware of his own previous position and did everything possible to avoid bias. This was assisted by the fact that he had not been directly involved in integrated education for 18 months before the case studies and, with four exceptions, had no prior contact with any of the staff or board members involved.

The research tools were chosen taking into consideration the issues raised with due regard paid to reflexivity and in the end there were no major problems during the case studies, apart from a few minor logistical issues involving timings of the visits and availability of staff or board members. There were also no significant adjustments to be made to any of the research tools or data capture methods.

In the next two chapters, the findings of the two case studies will be recorded and conclusions drawn from the research which will be analysed in the final chapter.

Chapter 5. Findings: An integrated ethos.

Introduction.

Following a literature review, a number of gaps in research evidence relating to integrated ethos were highlighted as follows:

1) There is no consistent view/perspective on what comprises an integrated ethos.
2) There is no consistency regarding the issue of how that ethos is created, stewarded, measured and practiced in integrated schools.
3) The way in which integrated schools understand the Christian component of ethos is under-researched.
4) Little research exits on how an integrated ethos might deal with other traditions and other faiths.
5) The manifestation of a Christian ethos in different school types has not previously been considered.

In the following two chapters the data is presented and key findings are drawn out, with appropriate reference being made to the results of the literature review. This chapter will deal with the data on integrated ethos and the next on the Christian ethos.

Case studies: details.

The details of the two case study schools will now be described.

Greenlands.

Greenlands is a small, urban former controlled primary school with 202 pupils, 10 teachers (including the principal), of whom four are Catholic. There are also 10 classroom assistants. The school population is approximately 43% Catholic, 35% other and 22% Protestant. It has an eight class base and in addition there are 52 pre-school places. The school has been working through the transformation process for over six years. Most staff working there were employed while it was a controlled primary, but five teachers have joined since the school transformed to integrated status. The current principal came to the school, post transformation, from a controlled school background. His main reason for applying for the position was not because the school was integrated, although he was aware of the integrated status.

In terms of the four staff members interviewed in the staff focus group, one joined as a supply-teacher since transformation. Another non-teaching staff member chose to come to Greenlands because it was integrated and she had previously worked in another integrated school. The other two members of this focus group, both teachers, had been at the school prior to transformation. One of the members of the board of governors interviewed in the board focus group is a Catholic in a mixed marriage (one partner being Protestant and one Catholic) now has her second child at the school and has nine years involvement with it. Another governor has been involved with the school from the first year of the transformation when her first child enrolled in Primary One. Another governor had a child at the school before transformation and chose the school because it was perceived to be the '*family school*'. At the time of the transformation, which happened when his child was in Primary Three, he was a member of the Parent Teachers' Association but not a governor.

Hollybank.

Hollybank is a large, urban, double-class intake, grant-maintained integrated primary school, established over 10 years ago, with 404 pupils and 53 nursery school places. The enrolment breakdown is 47% Catholic, 30% Protestant and 23% other. There are 22 teachers including the principal (four male and 18 female) and 20 classroom assistants with a community balance of 60% Protestant and 40% Catholic. The Governors have a board of 16 members including three new parent governors. Normally, six of the governors of a grant maintained integrated school form a foundation governor grouping, originally set up to steward the ethos and appointed by the founding integrated trust fund. The founding trust no longer appoints and the foundation members are now elected from a wide variety of backgrounds. The principal of Hollybank had been involved with the school since its establishment and had 25 years experience working in an integrated environment, prior to which she had worked in the Catholic sector. One staff member had five years experience of integrated schools, with the others each having over 20 years experience. One staff member joined because her mother was one of the founders of the primary school and she herself came from mixed marriage. Another became interested through her sister-in-law's involvement in fundraising for integrated education in 1984. Another staff member came because when she arrived from elsewhere in the UK and had chosen an integrated college for her child as it was all ability and integrated. The final staff member came to Ireland from overseas. The governors interviewed in the focus groups had a minimum of five and a maximum of 15 years experience serving as governors and were either foundation governors or parent representatives. They

became involved for a variety of reasons, one because of his own background as an 'outsider' and an allied strong personal belief in integration and social justice. The chairperson, who was in a mixed marriage, had over 10 years involvement in integrated education, all of that time as a member of the board. Another governor made the choice because, like the chairperson, she was in a '*mixed religion marriage*' and believed in integration between the two main traditions. Another governor had grown up as a child of mixed marriage and felt that this experience had given her a particular understanding of living with difference. Another was a member of the Orthodox tradition.

Detailed findings and analysis: Understanding school ethos.

During the data analysis a number of areas of agreement emerged on how members understood school ethos and these are described below.

Ethos and culture were different concepts.

The term '*ethos*' was used extensively in the printed material as well as on the websites and Facebook pages of both schools. For example, Greenlands' development plan which aimed to, '*translate the policies, ethos and aims of the school into practice'*, included 26 references to ethos. Although all participants indicated that they were conversant with the term 'ethos', when the concept was interrogated it became clear that there was no agreement on what the term actually meant (Montgomery et al, 2003). This ambiguity was clearest in the focus groups where, unprompted, members spoke of '*culture*', '*atmosphere*' and '*ethos*' interchangeably with the same general intent. So ethos,

> *'is how we do things around here' (teacher Greenlands),*
>
> *'is how you carry [the mission] out on a day-to-day basis' (principal Hollybank),*
>
> *'it's about values, beliefs, standards and so on' (chair Hollybank),*
>
> *'brings in the cultural elements as well' (principal Greenlands).*
>
> *'it's the atmosphere of the school , how it feels' (teacher Hollybank)*

When asked to differentiate '*ethos*' from '*culture*', with the exception of the principal of Hollybank who understood them to be synonyms (Prosser, 1999), all other members, while accepting they referred to different things, suggested the two terms were so closely linked that it was difficult to make any clear distinction in their meaning (Whitehead, 2006). However, when pressed, the majority view supported

Eisner's observations that ethos was '*the deep underlying structure of a culture ... the values that animate it*' (1994, frontispiece). So ethos was,

> *'the experienced element of the school's value base' (teacher Greenlands),*
>
> *'really it's the practicing of our values' (governor Greenlands),*
>
> *'it's about the values, the way in which you apply them in everyday life of the school' (principal Hollybank).*
>
> *'Ethos gives a tangible expression to the aspirations and it translated a vision or a notion or a set of values into real actions' (governor Hollybank)*

Participants were not only unanimous that ethos should embody the school's values and were clear that this internal element (ethos) not only had the potential to direct and influence the outward facing element (culture), but also had the potential to change this outward focus. This contrasts with Solvason's (2005) premise that ethos is drawn from experiencing the culture of the organisation.

Ethos was school-specific.

During the focus groups it became clear that all members believed ethos differed from school to school. So ethos was,

> *'that thing* that *you sense and you feel when you walk in the front door of the place' (principal Greenlands),*
>
> *'the feeling you get when you walk around the school' (teacher Hollybank),*

Not surprisingly perhaps, this observation was expressed most often by newer staff members, whose experience of other schools was more recent and vivid.

> *'I came from a school where you would never hear a prayer apart from the RE class... when I came here and saw my first assembly and that they were praying, I said Oh my God they are praying and they are singing' (teacher Greenlands).*

One staff member from Hollybank, who had recently come from another integrated school, commented on how Hollybank,

> *'did things differently than my other school', where 'we go out of our way [*here*] to integrate our parents, children, staff and throughout the school'.*

She illustrated this with examples relating to Hollybank's policy on flags and emblems, something absent in her former school. Although these comments confirm Murray's observations (2000) on ethos in integrated schools, it is a particularly interesting comment as both schools referred to were grant-maintained schools and

although literature exists contrasting controlled and GMI schools (Marriott, 2001;Loughrey et al, 2003), no literature addresses differences within GMI schools.

Ethos was socially constructed.

Discussions at both sites revealed that members unanimously saw ethos as a fluid phenomenon, best understood within the context of changing social realities (Bragg and Manchester, 2011). Although governors accepted they were in some way custodians of an ethos (Burgess, 1985), something dealt with in depth later in this chapter, none saw ethos as an institutional concept created by them as trustees (contra Barr, 2000). Instead, members saw the process of developing ethos as iterative, '*a journey*', with a general consensus that the application of ethos involved ongoing and considered reflection and, in this context, teachers commented that,

> *'the journey [the discussion] was as significant as the destination' (Greenlands).*
>
> *'It involves the way you think. It's your mind set ... the way you go about things [on the journey]' (Hollybank)*
>
> *'I would say it's the way we practise or values' (Greenlands)*
>
> *'I would qualify that and say it's the way we try and do things around here because we are sometimes not going to make it' (Hollybank)*

The '*journey*' metaphor was one which was consistently used during the research and one which was specifically highlighted by the majority of the longer serving staff and governors in Greenlands who were unanimous in stating that in their experience the school had a different, more intentional ethos than before transformation.

Ethos should be experienced.

All interviewees believed that ethos was a tangible thing which had visible as well as experiential elements. Supporting Murray (1985), this included,

> *'What was said and what was done' (staff member Hollybank)*
>
> *'It is what you see, what you hear, what you experience, it's the whole experience rolled into one' (principal Greenlands).*
>
> *'It is felt as well as seen' (teacher Hollybank).*

There was unanimity that for ethos to be effective it should be experienced and understood by the pupils (Johnston, 2001) and be capable of '*being absorbed and taken away by the pupils*' (teacher Greenlands). In other words, '*I'd like to think that my daughter [*understands*] and has taken some of the integrated ethos with her on*

her journey to her next school' (governor Greenlands). One governor offered an example to illustrate this claim.

> *'For me I think it's the experiences that my children have had at the school and all the things that they've been exposed to and all the things that they've learnt about. If they'd gone to a different school they possibly wouldn't have experienced certain things like...Lucy came home and was able to say 'Goraph's mum was in school, she brought us in Indian food, she told us about the goddess Shiva. She explained why she had a Bindi on her head".*

She explained that her daughter had talked positively about this experience adding that she has made new friends from other faith traditions, something she now sees '*as normal*'.

Ethos should be intentional.

Staff in both schools believed that ethos should not remain an aspirational element of school life (the superficial level of Donnelly, 2000), but needed to be robust, active and intentional to move to Donnelly's '*deep*' level.

> *'[*This involves*] the active welcoming of all those who are different and processes and strategies to deal with difference' (teacher Hollybank).*
>
> *'It involves how you treat all the people in your care... what is said as well as what is done' (teacher Greenlands).*
>
> *'Our ethos is down to the application and the intention. Anyone can come out with a statement but we make it happen from the top down' (chairperson Hollybank).*

All interviewees accepted that ethos should be reflected in the core leadership (Donnelly, 1999), class room practice (Donnelly, 2004b), curriculum, policies and procedures and should be evidenced in the attitudes displayed by staff and in the staff/ pupil relationships. '*It should be reflected in the way people speak to each other ... there's a mutual respect and manners*' (chairperson Greenlands). There was agreement that ethos included the visible elements of a school's life such as its wall displays, its celebrations, posters and emblems.

> *'We have a variety of flags on display to signify the various countries of the world ... backgrounds are being recognised' (chairperson Greenlands).*

The observational audits recorded evidence to support this element in particular.

Detailed findings and analysis: An integrated ethos.

During the discussions it became clear that participants believed that a '*specifically integrated ethos*' (governor Greenlands) existed and that '*it comprised a number of*

areas of school life' (teacher Greenlands). In common with existing research, (McLaughlin 2000 and Donnelly 2000), it emerged that when members talked about this '*integrated ethos*', comments and observations fell into two distinct categories. The first was when members talked about '*intentional*' or '*aspirational*' ethos, which the writer recorded as '*stated*' ethos, and the second related to how members interpreted or experienced ethos in practice, which the writer termed '*interpreted*' ethos. The writer chose the term '*interpreted*' for this second area, as the data comprised individual reflections and observations of how individuals, drawing on their '*deep seated thoughts, feelings and perceptions*' (Donnelly, 2000, p 151), interpreted the application of ethos in the life and practice of their schools.

During the data analysis, it emerged that there was a high degree of consensus between both school communities on a range of areas which members believed evidenced a discrete integrated ethos. It was an intentional construct and involved,
i) shared stewardship,
ii) high levels of parent and governor involvement,
iii) an intentional balance in intake,
iv) relevant policies and practices addressing contentious issues,
v) strong collegiate relationships
vi) an inclusive approach to multi-culturalism.
These areas will be considered briefly in the paragraphs following.

An integrated ethos was a conscious construct.
Staff and governors at both schools believed that developing an integrated ethos was a conscious construct (contra Wright, 1991) and was not created simply by having children from different traditions in the same classroom, although shared classrooms were seen as important (Trew,1998). Although it was accepted that there were other schools with mixed enrolments, the observation most frequently expressed was that integrated schools differed, in that, they work structurally at maintaining a community balance at all levels within the school (McGlynn, 2009), and organically by attempting to ensure that all faiths and none are respected within an inclusive ethos. To this end, participants claimed to work within an amalgam of reactivity and pro-activity in developing this intentional ethos (Fraser and Morgan, 1999),

> *'We had whole school assemblies about local events when trouble took place' (principal Hollybank),*
>
> *'We have had staff training on integration' (teacher Greenlands)*

'We have appointed a teacher for inclusion and diversity' (principal Hollybank).

The two schools differed only in that those at Hollybank did not see this intentionality as a new phenomenon, believing that this had always been a core element of their school.

*'We have never been a neutral environment, we [*have always*] used difference as something to celebrate in the school'. (principal)*

'We have never been a neutral environment...we have always tackled hard subjects which integrated schools were set up to confront, in a caring environment'. (governor)

*'[*This was a part of*] our founding principles, integration [which] is being continually improved'. (teacher)*

By contrast, members at Greenlands accepted that developing an integrated ethos was a new departure, but one now clearly defined in the new good relations policy *'which arose because of the growing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity and cultural heritage within the enrolment patterns'* (principal) and new mission statement.

'We open our arms to the entire community, growing and learning together, celebrating inclusion, individuality and diversity'. (Mission Statement)

'Good relations and inclusion practice has to engage people in seeing the other as a potential gift and not a danger'. (GR policy)

Teachers pointed to a variety of new interventions which have been developed to address diversity including,

'we have 22 national flags at the front of our school now' (teacher a),

'we have sacramental preparation for catholic children now' (teacher b)

'we involve a Polish priest in preparing the Polish children for the sacraments' (teacher c)

The principal recognised that this was a work in progress and that developing staff confidence and competence was the key to facilitating this area:

'I think a big player in the integrated ethos is how much the teaching staff are prepared to discuss, how far they are prepared to explore the issues which otherwise had been taboo for too long, and probably are not explored in the same capacity in non-integrated schools'.

An integrated ethos involves shared stewardship.

Early researchers of integrated education, Wilson and Dunn (1989) and Wright (1991), consistently highlighted the importance of parents and boards in stewarding ethos. Although both schools aspired to such a partnership (stated ethos), in reality it was less clear (interpreted ethos).

Governors' role.

Despite the claim in Greenlands' plan that governors and staff '*continue to reflect upon the school ethos at regular intervals*', governors recognised that developing an integrated ethos was something new to them and which would take time to evolve. They seemed, therefore, to be content that ethos would initially be driven by the principal, with their role being more passive. The discussions left no doubt that the principal had universal approval and drew a strong sense of trust from all board members, and so it is perhaps not surprising that the chair,

> *'was content with the school's ethos [*and believed that*] the governors' role was to support the principal in stewarding, not developing the ethos, as the school should be run by the professionals'*

It is possible that '*being content*' might indicate complacency, a proposition supported by the fact that the chair was unable to offer any evidence that the board monitored the school's ethos. It was clear that the chair was aware of the dangers of such passivity, as '*this could be difficult should that person [*the principal] *have strong views which were not supported by the rest of the school community*'.

Hollybank had been in existence for a considerably longer period and had a larger board (16 as opposed to nine) which met monthly and which had more parental involvement (a minimum of six out of the 16) than Greenlands' board. The chair's stated view of stewardship was that,

> *'the integrated ethos comes from the board through the principal and the teachers... [in reality] my role was to oversee ethos [*but*] it was the principal and the teachers who will manage and drive it because they are involved on a daily basis'.*

Further probing revealed that '*monitoring the ethos*', tended to be reactive and informal supporting Donnelly's observations (1999), carried out '*in that very nebulous way by parent governors who are there on a day-to-day basis*'. This view was shared by other governors of Hollybank who saw their role as one of reactive *'shared stewardship'* as they believed they were stewarding an existing ethos rather than creating a new one.

'The ethos has been set here for quite a few years; there's not a lot of work involved in setting the ethos. That has been set down and applied for a long number of years. From the 'founding fathers' and built up through the years. It has been pushed by the former principal.'

Governors felt that '*issues were adequately monitored and discussed as and when they arose*' (governor), mostly captured through papers or reports.

'Governors have access to the principal's report which is a day-to-day report of who is coming into the school, what is happening etc and this is a good opportunity to show what is happening in the school that's what I convey. There are also the staff reports which convey the day-to-day activities of the pupils'. (principal)

Although the Hollybank's governors also expressed '*comfort with the school's current ethos*', they made clearer statements about their corporate role than their colleagues in Greenlands. They saw this involved '*keeping control of balance ... overseeing policies and understanding what was happening in curriculum*'. During the focus groups some board members were able to converse in some detail about curricular activities and sacramental preparation. As with their counterparts in Greenlands, governors were clear that the '*contentment*' they expressed with the school's ethos reflected the level of trust they placed in the current principal who had been in the school for over 15 years.

Because this trust in their principals was seen as essential, governors of both schools believed that the board's role in interviewing a prospective principal was vital in ensuring that the board and principal shared the same vision on ethos. However, as neither board had ever discussed ethos or agreed what their school's vision might be, quite how any '*shared vision*' could be interrogated at such a principal's interview remained ambiguous.

In addition, it became clear that neither board had any method through which it measured ethos. This gap had been highlighted previously by McGlynn and Bekerman in 2006 and, while accepting that ethos measurement is not easy (McLaughlin, 2003), the absence of any method to gauge effectiveness of ethos left no clarity in how to measure success in delivering a robust integrated experience. After further probing, the lack of monitoring appeared to relate to role confusion, as governors in both schools believed their role to be strategic, something which appeared to involve discussing ethos '*by exception*', for example when there was a

cause for concern or new area to be considered. Consequently day-to-day monitoring of ethos was seen as an '*operational function*' left to the principal. The situation did however cause the chair of Greenlands to express some anxiety: '*It does concern me now you've raised it that I don't know what the policy* [on flags and emblems] *is*'. It remains open how this '*concern*' will be addressed.

Notwithstanding the role confusion, both schools agreed with Donnelly (1999) and believed that maintaining '*a good and open relationship between the board and the principal*' remained key to effective stewarding of ethos, but pointed out that this did not preclude differences of opinion, particularly when dealing with contentious issues. One example offered was when a governor had raised concern that a recent decision on how Greenlands had dealt with the reception of ashes on Ash Wednesday which had not been taken to the board for discussion. She stated that she would preferred to have discussed this at the board prior to any policy being established and has since requested that '*an item on ethos be included as an agenda item at each future board meeting*'. The principal confirmed that this has been actioned. It remained the principal's view that the challenge function which the board exercised was a vital component in developing a conversation about ethos.

It was interesting that governors aspired towards a stronger role for parent-governors in stewarding ethos, highlighted by this interchange in Greenlands.

> '*When I first became a member of the board of Governors, it quite shocked me when I first walked into the room because... how do I describe it tactfully ... all I saw were dinosaurs – old men, sitting around a table. I just thought to myself 'oh gosh, what have we got here?' and then there were a couple of other parents ... I don't think any parent governor had ever really been on the board before and I think it took a while for our board of governors to actually transform the school.' (*governor a*)*
>
> *Was it intentional? Was ethos part of the regular board meeting? (interviewer)*
>
> *No, not at the start. It took a while to evolve. (*governor a*)*
>
> *Who led the change? (interviewer)*
>
> *I'd like to think there was a better balance within the board of governors, I'd like to think... I think it was the parents coming on board – I think that's maybe what the problem had been before, that there was a lack of parental interest on the board of governors before*'. (governor a),
>
> *'We get involved – it's not just about turning up at the board meetings, the principal is very good at involving us in the day-to-day things at the school, touching base. He finds us a useful sounding-board. I'm encouraged to be involved. Even things like school trips – I mean last year they had a school trip to Poland, which was a phenomenal success, and my husband went along as a helper, very much*

encouraged to be a part of the whole thing' (governor b)

While accepting that he was the initial driver in developing ethos (Loughrey et al, 2003), the principal of Greenlands also believed that parent-governors should have a greater role in developing and stewarding the ethos because '*they can express views drawn from personal experience*'. He added that parent-governors who were in '*mixed marriages*' had brought additional value to ethos discussions as he felt this experience allowed them to speak about sharing between the two traditions with additional authority. During the focus groups, governors in both schools, who were in mixed-marriages confirmed this view from their own experiences.

The role of foundation and transferor-governors became an area of debate during the focus groups. In Hollybank, despite the current prospectus which stated that it was the foundation-governors who ensured that the school adhered to its founding ethos, it became clear that foundation-governors interpreted their role as subsumed within a corporate one, where they fed into the whole board on a continual basis. For this reason, despite the founding principles of integrated education and the stated intention of the school, this group had never considered it necessary to meet as a caucus on its own. The same was true of the transferor representatives in Greenlands, who had never met as a separate group at any time during the school's history. This omission raises some concerns about the future role of foundation and transferor-governors as distinctive groupings and will be discussed in the final chapter.

There were some areas in which the governors felt they had the potential to have a more direct influence on ethos. One is the influence that governors had on the school's prospectus which was vital as it '*promoted the school and its ethos to the outside world*' (governor Greenlands). Another was staff recruitment, where board members insisted teachers should express a

> *'commitment to integration' when interviewed for a job, as 'staff need to be aware of what needs to be done not just to satisfy the curriculum but to do what is right for the children... [so] they need to be happy with our ethos' (chair Greenlands).*

To this end, both boards ensured that a question to this effect was included in the interview to test the commitment of the applicant to integration. The board required that the response to the question should go beyond a simple '*Yes*' answer, and involve a fuller explanation of the candidate's personal commitment to integration. As

a consequence, '*if they said no, then I would ask, why do you want this job?*' (chair Hollybank).

Principal's role.

Despite the key role which both principals had in developing ethos, the principal in Greenlands realised he had not always given his full attention (Montgomery et al, 2003).

> *'I wish I had more time to consider the ethos and more time to manage it if that's possible. I think it is. But I wish I wasn't so tied up with it day-to-day, juggling multiple balls to please all of these people that are around me'.*

His monitoring was *ad hoc* and seemed to be subjective in nature.

> *'I gauge ethos in the corridors, I gauge it at lunchtime, I gauge it in the playground and I make a point of trying to get out and wander amongst the children, listen to the staff, engaging with the kids and so on*'

Although he did not appear to offer feedback to staff members, no concerns were raised during the research. This lack of concern would have been an interesting area to explore in greater depth had time permitted.

The principal of Hollybank had long, personal experience of how an integrated ethos should be mediated and believed that her job was made easier because she, and her board colleagues, were aware that the previous principal had developed a '*strong integrated brand*', a term which appeared to be used by the principal as a synonym for a good reputation as an integrated school. In her view, the former principal was '*the flame and the fire for the integrated ethos and I am following in her footsteps*' and she saw her own role as primarily in affirming, stewarding and promoting that inherited ethos. She was also clear however, that she had the authority to mould and change the ethos, and so she described her role as,

> *'...a bit of both [*maintaining what went before and adding her views*]. It was putting my stamp on the ethos. I have added a few tweaks in the curriculum'.*

Although she accepted that it was she who drove ethos, she ensured that relevant opportunities were provided at staff meetings for debate and discussion on key issues and related concerns, although pointing out that this was not on a regular, formalised basis. She believed that staff members had a major role in negotiating and mediating ethos and so when she saw evidence of practice which she felt was not in keeping with this ethos, she took decisive action. She offered one such

example when she saw a staff colleague speak in what she considered to be a '*disrespectful way to a parent*'. After the event, she '*took him to one side*', explaining how in her view his attitude and approach didn't accord with the school ethos. She offered no detail on what the matter under discussion had been with the parent or how the staff member responded and as he was not in the focus group, it was unfortunately not possible to follow this up.

Staff's role.

Staff members at both schools felt that new teachers accepted the school's ethos, almost imbibed it '*organically, albeit following the principal's lead*' (teacher Hollybank). Enculturation, a term normally applied to the process through which individuals learn and adapt to the requirements of a surrounding culture through conscious and unconscious means (Kottak, 2007), is a well researched phenomenon (Nimmo and Smith, 1995; Veerman, 1984). It is also a process which has been highlighted as influential in acclimatising new teachers to existing school cultures, particularly through induction and developing good relations with veteran teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1996). In this area, it is generally accepted that,

> '*the challenge for school principals during the induction and enculturation of new teachers is to develop a deep understanding of school culture so they can adjust to the school climate*'. (Blakely, 2006, p. 21)

Both principals confirmed this view and observed that staff became '*captured*' by the ethos (Greenlands), so that, '*when we have a new person here ... you see him moulding into the way we are*' (Hollybank). It is, therefore, not surprising that this assimilation appeared to be a commonly held sign of success by all staff. As one staff member reflected, '*most of our staff have been here a long time, the people who will come new to us they just pick this up and sense this*'. Such an assumption, however, might also obscure the fact that new staff feel obliged to assimilate, without any possibility of challenging this as a normal '*rite of passage in transformation into teaching professionals*' (ibid, p 23).

Most staff at Hollybank felt that the school had a strong sense of ethos and acceptance, which one teacher suggested included humour.

> *'If you want to see our ethos the staff room is a good place to start – there's so much slagging [*joking*] here....'*

In addition to encouraging a positive working environment (Romero and Curthirds, 2006) the use of humour can also be a negative indicator, used as a displacement technique to avoid dealing with hard issues (Smith et al, 2000) alienating new members who do not understand the joke. Despite this caveat, staff appeared to perceive the use of humour positively,

> *'I feel that good relationships are key. There are respectful staff conversations in the staffroom here, there is safety and people feel safe to share things within that you wouldn't find in other staff rooms. There are no cliques'.*

An integrated ethos involved maintaining community balance.

Structurally, DE requires a school which wishes to achieve integrated status to be able to maintain a minimum community balance in the pupil enrolment (an enrolment of 30% from whatever is considered to be the minority tradition) within the catchment. The aspiration to follow this at a structural level was reflected in the core documents of both schools. The claim to be *'integrated'* rather than *'mixed'* was reflected in both schools, both of which highlighted the word *'integrated'* in their signage and literature. It was this consciously balanced intake which members believed differentiated an integrated school over and against that of a *'mixed-religion school'* which may attract students from both of the main traditions. All members believed that a balanced religious intake was important, otherwise *'how can you have a truly integrated ethos when you don't have an integrated population there?'* (principal Greenlands).

For all interviewed it was clear that historically integrated schools intentionally educated Protestants and Catholics together and, despite growing multi-culturalism, participants concurred that this was still their core aim. At one level, the belief that *'integrated education is still primarily about addressing the legacy of our divided past'* (governor Greenlands) supports Dunn's early observation that schools aimed to *'celebrate both identities by allowing them to live and flourish side by side within the schools with tolerance and respect'* (1989, p 122). However, at another level the need for a balanced intake appeared to be more important than sustaining a strategy about how the integrated ethos might be developed and monitored to ensure it embraced the two main traditions equally (McEwen, 1999). The reason for this focus may be pragmatic, in that, unless a school can demonstrate balance, it risks losing its integrated status.

There was some evidence of thinking beyond numbers where there were no implications for integrated status, for example, the principal of Hollybank had recently made some more significant changes in her approach to balance within staff. During this period '*the first principal came through the balance and paranoia of this architecture of structured numbers'*. She illustrated this with a recent example of that legacy, when the previous principal had visited the school.

> '*So here's a silly example, she came in and noticed that I had moved some staff in that area and she said you know there are now all Catholic staff round there now? And I went to explain to her that I knew this and that this was part of a long term plan...' '*[for me*] it's the best person for the job, as we are inherently integrated ...it doesn't matter if it [is] all Protestant or Catholic [*staff*] and we make the decision to move staff due to their skill not their religion*'.

It appeared that as the school's reputation had been established for some time, she was now less concerned about maintaining a rigorous religious balance on the staff team. Initially, she believed the school was being closely examined to see '*what the balance looked like to the outside world*' and, therefore, ensuring balance in staffing had been as important as getting the best qualified member of staff.

An integrated ethos dealt with contentious issues.

All staff and governors agreed that an integrated ethos should consciously deal with contentious issues and that this intention should be reflected in the school's policies and procedures, and addressed through robust classroom practice supported by relevant training. The comments made on policies addressing contentious matters were particularly interesting, as research had highlighted a policy gap in this area (Montgomery et al, 2003). These two areas will be dealt with in turn.

Policies.

The schools had acquired their integrated status in different ways, with Greenlands, a recently transformed school still on '*the journey to full integration*' (principal), while Hollybank was a purpose-built, grant-maintained school. The principal in Greenlands advised that he was new to integrated education and found there were no policies on contentious issues when he arrived.

> '*Certainly when I arrived here I know that my predecessor had, for obvious reasons, had to take the school through a very grey period ... in the sense that it had to be a neutral zone, it had to be an unbiased, inoffensive area for the both parts of the community, the two major cultures coming into this school*'.

Since transforming, he believed that he had begun to address this deficit and in order to create a greater sense of ownership he had attempted to develop some policies along with his senior colleagues.

> *'We've an inclusion policy now which is relatively new. That was established last year I think it was. That was taken on by two of my Catholic staff, one of which was the first Catholic teacher here. They were drivers of it and it was very admirable of them to take that job on and I know that it wasn't easy for her [*as a new teacher*].'*

He offered two other developments which he believed had also addressed the gap. The first was a new sports policy, with an increased range of sporting activities, including Gaelic sports, a perceived Nationalist activity and not previously part of the school's curriculum before transformation. The second was a new peer-mediation policy whereby pupils were able to learn how to resolve differences of opinion through dialogue. He was aware there were still gaps in some areas but claimed that this was intentional and reflected the school's '*journey into integration*'.

As absence of policies does not always indicate avoidance but might instead be linked to personal style (Montgomery et al, 2003), or to the stage of school development and it was important to attempt to understand the reason for this gap. There were clear examples of avoidance, such as the absence of a policy on Religious Education (RE) where the principal admitted it had,

> '*been quite a contentious issue which we ran out of time with the staff to discuss it and we want to keep coming back to it because there's still a lot of different opinions*' (principal).

There were also some examples where the principal was addressing policy gaps, but had yet to develop a formal policy, such as the controversial area of flags, emblems and sporting allegiances. In Northern Ireland, the issue of wearing football tops had been contentious, as the two main cultural traditions have tended to align themselves to one or other of the two 'big' Scottish clubs, Rangers and Celtic. Protestants tended to have an allegiance to Rangers, while Catholics normally supported Celtic and, therefore, the wearing of either club's regalia was a reasonable indicator of community background. In this context, the principal had developed an idea of what constituted, for him, '*acceptable practice*' on the display of flags and emblems, including the wearing of football jerseys.

> *'From the day and hour I came in here I made a conscious decision to say' This school has been through enough grey periods and colour has to come back' and in terms of football tops I made the conscious effort to say to the community that in*

the safe confines of the school your children may wear whatever they wish to wear when they're not in their school uniform to express their identity'.

Despite his stated position on jerseys, it became clear that the principal's decision had not been passed on or understood by the staff and, during the interviews, staff observed that in the absence of agreed policies or procedures, they used their own judgement on what constituted appropriate action in such circumstances, a situation which had led to inconsistent practice.

'Do you have a policy on flags and emblems?' (researcher)

'When the previous principal was here it was no Celtic tops, no Rangers tops, nothing that was going to cause offence. But integration is it not about turning those views around and accepting?' (teacher b)

'But do you have a policy?' (researcher)

'Yes we do'. (teacher b)

'The other thing, it affects the older ones more than the infants. There were no problems on sports day.' (teacher c)

'Well before, they would have played in football tops but there wouldn't have been any Rangers/Celtic'. (teacher a)

'Then there was Man United and Liverpool'. (teacher b)

'It was more about the team than being religious'. (teacher d)

'Before there would be more trouble for a football top for the alcohol that it advertised than the team is supports. Football strips from the likes of Rangers, one of the girls in P7 is a big Rangers fan, would wear them all the time now and it has, as far as I know, not caused any issues'. (teacher a)

'Do you know does the school have a policy?' (researcher)

'Well obviously'. (teacher a)

'Maybe it's an oral policy'. (teacher b)

Hollybank which had been in existence for over 20 years, had more policies in place than its transforming counterpart and claimed that '*all school policies and teaching and learning [*should*] aim to reflect the integrated ethos*' (principal). The members recognised, however, that policies and procedures must reflect lived reality and to this end the principal had developed a new flags and emblems policy which encouraged wearing different football tops in certain circumstances, as the principal believed that sectarian attitudes were '*still [reflected] in Celtic and Ranger and so on'*. For this reason she pointed out that although *'lots of schools ban shirts but we encourage wearing shirts'* as by encouraging dialogue th rough *'discussing issues like*

flags and emblems', she believed that an attitude of tolerance and respect could be developed.

The school had also developed a new integration policy in 2010 which included a series of guidelines for '*promoting an integrated ethos'.* One section on, '*dealing with awkward issues in integration*', offered some suggestions to teachers on how to handle difficult issues. This was built on the principle that such practice should,

> '*... ensure that personal convictions are not diluted but rather enriched by the sharing of experiences amongst the entire school community*'.

The principal had rolled out training on the new policy to all staff, as she recognised that continual staff development was necessary. This focus on staff development picked up a need identified by Smith and Robinson (1996), and Webb (2009) and was an area highlighted on a number of occasions by both schools. In this context staff in Hollybank referred to one recent occasion when the principal set up a series of meetings where staff discussed contentious issues such as Orange marches and prejudice. The principal accepted that open discussion of difficult matters amongst staff was a work in progress, particularly for the new members, many of whom had never experienced discussions on difficult subjects before. She indicated that although many new staff remained silent during these early sessions, this tended to improve the longer they spent in company with their peers.

> *'We had staff meetings discussions about Drumcree [*where there had been a loyalist stand-off due to an Orange march being re-routed*] and some people were very uncomfortable about that from the Catholic side and I know that there were some people who were less willing to speak out and put their identity on the line. You have to try and draw people out to feel valued – I don't know how successful we were for I feel that some people felt compromised'.*

Most staff were of the view that this had been a successful method, something they appeared to measure due to the fact that '*after a while, the people who come new to us, they just seem to pick up and sense this stuff* [how to address integration]'. Although the silence of new staff during these hard conversations could suggest a process of enculturation, it might also imply that new members feel a lack of power to raise concerns. This area is significant, given the role that the induction process plays in enculturation (Blakely, 2006) and would have been an interesting area to follow up had more time been available.

Although Hollybank's staff handbook claimed that all staff received induction training in understanding an integrated ethos, an anomaly arose when one teacher claimed that this had not been the case for her.

> '*What happened, when we have new staff there is a booklet which is handed over to them which talks about ethos, specifically handed over to the staff and it talks about in our school. When we get a new member of staff I will spend time with the member of staff and work this through.*' (senior teacher b)
>
> '*No one talked to me about ethos, I must have sneaked in here*'. (teacher a)

In making a joke of the omission the teacher distracted the discussion at this point and the staff members carried on talking about how ethos was experienced. It was not, therefore, possible to determine whether the reason she had not been trained was a result of omission or a lack of communication. What was clear, however, was that in her case the stated ethos contained in the guidelines had not been followed through in any robust manner. The senior staff member did come back later in the discussion and accept that '*it is my responsibility to communicate to staff when they come in how we do things around here*'. She agreed to follow this omission up after the focus group.

It became clear during the staff interviews, that despite the existence of policies dealing integration and with flags and emblems in Hollybank, there was no agreement within the group on what constituted acceptable pupil behaviour and appropriate staff responses, with staff divided, for example, on how to deal with the wearing of football tops. Some felt that they should not be worn at all, while others believed that they were acceptable, provided they were worn after school, in voluntary time. In the absence of such clarity, teachers tended to use their own discretion or '*common sense*' (Montgomery et al, 2003). There was consensus that, although some staff had discussed practice with individual colleagues, this issue had never been addressed in the context of a whole staff discussion. This raised questions on the priority given to dealing with contentious issues and will be discussed in the next section.

In summary, contrary to the findings of Marriott (2001) and Loughrey et al (2003), teachers at both schools were unanimous in claiming the ethos of both schools actively encouraged addressing the difficult issues, whether or not actual policies existed. It was clear from the discussions that all teachers believed they took age-appropriate opportunities to initiate and discuss issues which raised the area of a

shared society, and examples were offered including '*dealing with the recent past', 'the Irish question', 'the politics of Ireland', 'sport, language and new cultures*'. Most of these areas appeared to be dealt with reactively and emerged from classroom discussions on curricular areas or topical events. Some of the more contentious issues, such as '*identity and orange marches*' were dealt with in '*circle time*' (Donnelly and Hughes, 2006), which teachers felt was the best method of developing pupils '*understanding of complex issues and helping them form opinions on contentious matters, in a safe environment*' (teacher, Hollybank). However, it was clear that neither school had come to an agreement on how policies were implemented or what constituted good practice, an omission which had led to inconsistencies in interpreting policies.

Practice.

It is clear that the existence of policies is, in itself, no guarantee that the policies are either understood or applied (Montgomery et al, 2003). Even when policies are in place, as Donnelly noted (2004a), many teachers avoided engaging with hard issues in the classroom and staff-room. The reasons for avoidance are varied, with some believing that it might be simply too risky to deal with as it would only '*open a can of worms'*. Alternatively others might not feel sufficiently prepared due to a lack of training, not helped by the largely segregated nature of teacher training in Northern Ireland which may not best prepare teachers for dealing with difference (Hughes, 2011). Given these observations, it was important to consider how members of both schools understood and interpreted the concept of addressing '*hard issues'*.

All staff agreed that an integrated ethos was not created by placing children from different traditions together in a class so that '*by a process of osmosis integrated schools will generate more tolerant individuals*' (Hughes and Donnelly, 2006, p.93). All believed that it required the proper use of a safe, shared classroom space as a vehicle to build the trust necessary to raise and explore difficult issues safely (McGlynn, 2009). The quality of the contact was considered a key element of such engagement (Niens and Cairns, 2005). There was a consensus that once trust has been created within a classroom setting, it had been possible to discuss sensitive subjects in a safe space.

Both principals stated that dealing with such hard issues should be a core component for all integrated schools and believed that this was something which parents '*bought*

into when they choose an integrated school' (teacher Greenlands). The principal of Greenlands was of the view that every day,

> '*you're dealing with issues which many another person might shy away from and say I'm not going there because I'll end up with parents getting upset about it. Whereas I know I can say I'm talking about this with a collective audience who I like to believe have signed up to the school with the same commitment to education and ethos, shared future as I have*'.

Despite these comments, the principal of Hollybank recognised that a few new parents did not fully appreciate what an integrated environment was and that they,

> '*will send their children here as they perceive it to be safe and because they feel they won't have a cultural identity*'.

She was unclear why parents have developed this perception but she is unequivocal, that this was not the reality as,

> '*we do ask them to talk about their identity, we are not neutral. We are not everyone is the same; we discuss difference and enrich the celebrations within the school. This is real because we work at it we bring people in we talk to them'.*

This statement appeared to draw support from teachers at both schools who explained that classroom practice did not follow a '*benign co-existence*' model (teacher Greenlands), which '*avoided hard conversations like mixed schools',* (teacher Hollybank), but that they actively worked with the mix of traditions to encourage learning and interactions, including pro-actively dealing with contentious issues.

> '*In some of these other schools, they may be integrated in all but name, but if it was it's by accident, it's not intentional to try and bring people together. There isn't a focus for driving that forward, it just happens to be that there are some people from one community and there're some people from another but there's no sort of mutual understanding being developed and promoted in this school. I'd say it's by accident as opposed to by design*'. (governor Hollybank)

While teachers accepted that these difficult issues were mostly talked about in '*circle time*' (White, 2009), they pointed out that this is set within a broader context of shared classrooms which allow hard issues to be addressed within a context of mutual respect.

> *'We do not just brush it [*hard issues*] under the carpet but it's a conscious decision to address it in class'. (*principal Hollybank*)*

Staff in Greenlands believed that adopting an integrated approach to learning, including addressing hard issues, had now become a default in their daily classroom practice, something they believed had not been the case before transformation.

> *'with the previous principal it was no Celtic or Rangers tops, nothing that was going to cause offence. But integration, is it not about turning those views around?' (teacher a)*
>
> *'there's much more opportunities to talk about the differences in people and we're able to work around those and work together even though we're different'. (teacher b)*

Another teacher added that now she would actively talk about hard issues '*such as prejudice, politics and religion, to colleagues as well as within my classroom*', whereas before transformation this would not have been acceptable classroom practice. During the focus group in Greenlands, although all staff agreed with this view, they observed that the absence of any policy context and lack of any vehicle by which to benchmark classroom practice for the '*appropriateness of approach in dealing with sensitive areas*' (teacher) had led to inconsistent practice. One new teacher reflected that,

> *'ethos tends to cascade, boards of governors are meant to hold it a bit, you know like they protect the ethos. But when it gets down to us [*the classroom teacher or assistant*], we may not be aware of what the policy is and then somebody looking after the kids in the playground might say, 'what are you wearing that for?' It could be a badge, it could be a wee sticky tattoo, it could be language that's used. There is no consistency, so there's something about making sure that people know what your policies are.'*

As a result, teachers tended to talk amongst themselves to ensure a common approach. Although the absence of relevant policies had led the teachers in Greenlands to base their decisions on what constituted appropriate practice on a mixture of experience, intuition and integrity, all were agreed that they would not attempt to influence pupils through presenting their own views. The intention was not to exert undue influence on the pupils by giving a '*correct answer*' on such contentious matters, but rather to present a range of viewpoints. One teacher offered an illustration of this approach.

> *'I was asked by a pupil, 'Sir do you think Catholics are Christians?' I raised the point that what makes you Christian isn't so much what you're doing, but your relationship with God. I argued that plenty of people attend Protestant churches who have no relationship with God and there are plenty who attend Roman Catholic churches who are active in their faith. I believe I was presenting both sides of the argument and allowing the pupil to ask further questions or leave it there.'*

The lack of written policies in Greenlands and the consequent inconsistency in practice was also highlighted in the area of pupil behaviour, where a perceived sectarian comment had been made by a pupil. It appeared that a child used a sectarian term of another child, calling him a *'fenian'* (a derogatory term for a Catholic). Despite the lack of a written policy on how to address such an issue, the teachers appeared to know what *'custom and practice'* was in the school and the event was referred to the principal for action. Although all teachers agreed that was the correct route, there was a considerable divergence of opinion on how such an event should be recorded. Not all teachers would have noted this occurrence as an incident in a classroom book if it were *a 'first offence',* while others would have recorded it irrespective of whether or not it was the first time.

> *'For most teachers it's down to preference whether they decide to keep an incident book. If the incident arises again they can refer to it and say look on three weeks on such and such a day you used that sort of term and that's not acceptable. (teacher B)*

> *'For that I personally wouldn't record that comment as an incident. If it was a repeated thing that would be different - it depends on what he had done. (teacher A)*

It seemed therefore that any action depended on the context of the incident and the approach of the individual teacher.

> *'One particular time when he [*the same pupil] *was singing the sash [a song connected with Protestantism] , I spoke to him and I maybe even did say to [*the principal*] about it. When I talked to him about it afterwards it sort of became clear that he didn't get that this was a song that some people might not like, you know? It's a tune that he's heard; it may not have any significance to the child. Well instead of saying 'we don't do that here and therefore this is wrong' I said 'that comes from a particular tradition' and in that context it isn't appropriate here' (*teacher B*)*

> *'But I think if you've got a child who is consistently coming through I think that would be dealt with differently but I think in the example that we're talking about, one character with two incidents over a year, I don't think it would be fair on him to categorize him and I certainly don't think, I mean, when you talk to him and work through with him there's not that sectarian sense. If he was P6 going on into P7 I wouldn't be going and saying 'Mrs. A, watch for him because he can be a wee bit sectarian', it wouldn't be appropriate for him'. (*teacher A*)*

The teachers agreed that they had talked informally about the incident in the staff room and shared their differing views with one another. The matter, however, was left unresolved as the staff did not approach the principal for his views on the incident. In discussion they stated they believed that as '*he had been given the case to deal with, he would take the appropriate action*'. It didn't seem to occur to any of the staff that this could have presented an opportunity to have a discussion with the principal on an area of uncertainty. This absence of action appeared to reflect an overall lack of

clarity on roles and responsibilities within the school, wherein the teachers saw the principal as empowered to take decisions on discipline and sensitive matters. It may also suggest that teachers are content to avoid hard issues, and desire no role on developing policies or procedures in this regard in integrated practice, supporting Donnelly's findings (2004a).

In Hollybank, the general view of all members was that intentionally addressing hard issues had been a longstanding approach, as the principal pointed out,

> '*Right from the very beginning we had hard conversations. There were parents who didn't like that. When we opened there were the troubles, the Shankill bombers [*a bomb was planted by republican terrorists on the Protestant Shankill Road in 1993 killing nine civilians*] and we had whole school assemblies on that. Some parents did not like that*'.

The principal stated that staff regularly dealt with contentious issues and as a result, she still received some complaints from some Protestant families, when for example they,

> '*had a whole school assembly about Pope John Paul dying. We had some calls from the local community on that one ... my child's not coming in for that... It was a real challenge to those guys out there*'.

The principal was robust in defending her position to those parents who disagreed and made it clear that such approaches were integral to school life. She believed her intervention had been successful as no children were withdrawn over the matter. She also had complaints from Catholic families about the sale of poppies for Remembrance Sunday, but again the matter had been successfully addressed through negotiation.

> '*Poppies are for sale although we may have had in the past parents who had problems with this but they are still sold'. (*teacher*).*

The principal was clear that decisions on how to address hard issues were developed together with the whole staff team, particularly her senior colleagues (Frances and Grindle, 2001). To this end she had appointed a senior teacher to deal with diversity and ethos, a decision taken because,

> *'our founding principles are integration, child centred-ness and parental involvement. Each member of the Senior Management Team has one element of those principles as it was important that all are visible. They are not taken for granted they are continually improved'. (*senior teacher*)*

During the discussions in Hollybank, all staff gave examples of addressing contentious issues including the use of circle time and all appeared to be able to explain the school policies on dealing with contentious matters such and flags, emblems and football jerseys.

> *'What would you do if the issue of football jerseys was raised'* (interviewer)
>
> *'They would be discussed '*(staff member C)
>
> *'Bring it on, if the children want to wear...We don't say you are not allowed to wear your Celtic kit'* (staff member A)
>
> *'Staff understand this. We address difference'* (teacher).

In general, staff members were better able to explain their school's approach to dealing with difficult matters than their colleagues in Greenlands, not surprisingly perhaps, given Hollybank had a significant number of policies in place. The most common expression used was they '*celebrated difference*', which appeared to link to issues of trust and respect and reflected a liberal approach to multiculturalism (Mc Glynn, 2007)

> '*Some schools find it hard to celebrate difference. We are opening people to difference [*in our classrooms*], however celebrating might be the wrong term to use. It is about respecting one another for who they are and who they are not*' (teacher a).
>
> *'It is about respecting difference, you don't always have to agree'* (governor)
>
> *'we go a step beyond co-existence, here. The children are given every opportunity to discuss differences'* (teacher b)

Staff highlighted a series of events which they believed '*celebrated difference*' including the provision of an Irish club, special events to celebrate anniversaries in the two main traditions and the involvement of outside speakers. In addition staff identified the use of circle time as one of the key methods used to deal with any significant issues arising. During the discussions, although staff appeared more consistent in classroom practice than staff at Greenlands, they too highlighted the need to have a forum to discuss and share good practice in dealing with difficult issues and to have refresher training on school policies.

An integrated ethos involved a whole school approach.

There was consensus that integration should pervade the whole of school life and the term most often used was '*a whole school approach*'. So, the staff and board of both schools agreed that the whole curriculum, including the '*hidden curriculum*' (Skelton, 1997), had significant ethos-forming roles. In addition, all staff were clear that they

had a key role in supporting an everyday, integrated experience in all areas (Donnelly, 2004a), and that integration was neither a subject which was taught like English or History, nor a cross-curricular theme like Education for Mutual Understanding. Members understood ethos to be as much linked to the way teachers related to the pupils in their classrooms and relationship building through collaborative dialogue (Webb, 2009) as what they taught. The belief that *'it is how we teach rather than what we teach'* was common amongst all teachers.

Hollybank's integration policy stated that the integrated ethos permeated the curriculum at all levels including the choice of English and History texts, the sports activities, the anti-bias curriculum, policies on symbols and emblems, the uniform policy and provision for managing social, cultural, religious or political events. One senior teacher at Hollybank suggested that ethos was facilitated through relating the curriculum to children's lives together with demonstrating good classroom practice.

> '*This understanding, acceptance and appreciation should arise naturally from the study of the various subjects on the curriculum, and also through the building of self-esteem in children and teachers alike*'. *It is not the same as co-existence. Integration actually means it's OK to be with the other and being informed, we are more than learning about each other and being inclusion through exploration of difference.*'

The whole school approach incorporated extra-curricular activities, some of which, like the introduction of Irish dancing classes in Greenlands, were an attempt to develop a wider cultural experience for the Protestant children. Staff stated that these additional activities '*served to enhance the pupil experience and help to demonstrate integration in practice*'.

As a school new to integration, Greenlands recognised its lack of practical experience in developing new subjects aimed at developing a more overt integrated ethos and so tended to use experienced, external agencies, such as Corrymeela, a cross community peace agency, and Child Evangelism Fellowship, to facilitate discussion on some of these new areas of the curriculum as well as to deliver some extra-curricular activities.

Both principals believed that the voluntary nature of the extra-curricular activities meant that parents and children could choose to become involved as much or as little as they like and this offered some feedback on '*appetite for dealing with new and sometimes difficult areas*', for example perceived Nationalist sports associated with the Catholic community.

An integrated ethos should be multi-cultural.

It is clear that any integrated ethos needed to address the divisions and differences between the two traditional communities (Dunn et al,1990: McEwen, 1999) and school structures as DE approvals were predicated on this focus. As the Northern Ireland community became more multi-cultural, however, questions emerged as to whether this focus was capable of embracing other cultures (Smith, 2003; McGlynn, 2003). In such a context, it has been suggested that schools should invest in a critical multicultural approach "*where difference is celebrated and addressed in a context that encourages students to question the inequalities existing in society*" (McGlynn, 2003, p.13). Interestingly, a later study found that "*integrated schools appear to be not only multicultural in that diversity is explored, but also intercultural because learning between cultures has clearly taken place" (*McGlynn, 2009, pg *307)*. In the two case studies, although it was accepted that the prime focus was on developing integration between the two main communities, all staff interviewed and most of the governors believed that an integrated ethos, by its nature, should embrace other cultures and traditions openly.

The focus on including children from other cultures was referred to in key documents of both schools and, reflecting Loughrey et al's findings (2003), staff claimed that this was evidenced in special assemblies and specific events, teaching on other faiths in the RE syllabus and in some of the wall displays which depicted people of other cultures. The principal of Greenlands felt that the visible ethos was a significant contributor to inclusion and referred to the fact that his school displays flags from over 20 countries in the entrance hall. There was, however, a question about how the principal interpreted multi-culturalism.

> '*When our new murals were going up ... I said to the guys putting them up to make sure you have a nice wee brown face in there which goes with the whole multicultural thing*'.

He did not seem to consider how the term '*a wee brown face*', might have been perceived by others and somehow perceived the display of colour as congruous with '*going with the whole multi-cultural thing*'. He did, though, accept, albeit after prompting, that there was a danger that representing ethnic minorities in publications could become tokenistic.

> '[Including children from ethnic backgrounds] *worried me to an extent when we were doing our new prospectus, I asked is it too contrived? Am I doing this deliberately? Like a little Indian girl from the school on the front cover. Is that too much?'*

In this context, it became clear that no discussions had taken place at either school to consider whether or not multi-culturalism should be approached in a different way than how the schools have traditionally addressed integration of the two main communities (McGlynn, 2007). There was, rather, a view that the intentional integrated ethos would automatically include those of other cultures, as such an ethos was predicated on addressing prejudice and dealing with difference wherever that was found. Probing questions revealed an agreement that a greater priority in staff discussion time needed to be afforded to this area, and that some space should be created to allow for discussion on developing a strategy for multi-cultural inclusion and good classroom practice. This need, previously identified by Smith (2001) and McGlynn (2005), was not mentioned by either principal and highlights a lack of priority given to this area as well as the need for consideration to be given to continued professional development.

Teachers at both schools stated that they experienced multi-culturalism within the staff teams where there were increasing numbers of staff from other cultures.

> *'looking at the teachers individually, -one of our new teachers was black - a parent coming into the school, sees us as integrated straight away'* (teacher Greenlands)

> *'do I place value in the fact that I have a black member of staff? Yes I do, of course. Would another integrated school like one? Yes, I bet they would. Could they get one? Maybe not so easily. And it's also a visual reminder I suppose it doesn't hold any huge favour that I don't show any favouritism there, all equals in my eyes, a teacher is a teacher' (principal Greenlands)*

Once again the focus appeared to be on the visible, representational nature of colour as totemic, automatically conferring a multi-cultural ethos, without a deeper interrogation of how the teacher felt included and his culture affirmed.
Staff in both schools believed that their school made active use of the new mix of pupils in a positive fashion (Loughrey et al, 2003: McGlynn, 2003)

> *'we do food days, not different menus for school dinners but the fact that how children, where children eat was taken into account as well'. (teacher Greenlands)*

> *'today is Hanukah I would tell the children about the festival [*explaining it*] within the Jewish culture' (teacher Hollybank).*

This approach was described as,

> *'celebrating difference rather than simply promoting unity' (teacher Hollybank),*

'about allowing for the expression of individualism instead of developing a 'same-ness' (governor, Greenlands).

The principal of Hollybank pointed to the employment of a support teacher for children who had English as a second language and parent induction sessions for incoming families as evidence of her commitment to multi-culturalism.

Summary.

During the research, a number of issues emerged which merit further consideration.

Integrated ethos.

Members were unanimous that there was a specifically integrated ethos, (contra Wright, 1991), something they claimed to be a conscious construct unlike the ethos in mixed-religion schools which they believed to be coincidental (McGlynn, 2003). They believed that an integrated ethos was a whole-school construct comprising shared stewardship, high levels of parent and governor involvement, an intentional balance in intake, relevant policies and practices addressing contentious issues, strong collegiate relationships and an inclusive approach to multi-culturalism.

Neither school had any system to monitor ethos and as individual classroom practice was not moderated by principals, teachers used their initiative to develop their own classroom ethos which was not audited against any agreed whole-school interpretation (McGlynn and Bekerman, 2006, pg 7). When the management styles of the principals, the absence of an agreed space to discuss good practice, the lack of consensus on how contentious matters should be addressed, and the paucity of policies were added together, there was an inherent danger that inconsistent practice could emerge, restricting potential benefits for young people. (Montgomery et al, 2003).

Stewarding ethos.

Principals.

The principals emerged as the key drivers of ethos (Donnelly, 2005) operating from a position of perceived power (Hogan, 1984), backed up with an authority delegated in trust by their boards. This meant that boards had little control over stewardship (contra Wilson and Dunn, 1989). Although teachers at both schools felt they lacked influence on contributing to school ethos, they accepted that they did have freedom to create an ethos at a micro-level within their own classrooms (Donnelly, 2000). As

few teachers shared any strategic role in ethos-formation (Donnelly, 2004b), both schools were placed in a compromised position in the event that either head teacher left their posts, as the role of developing and stewarding ethos was inextricably linked to the person as well as to the post.

Governors.

In Greenlands, transferor-governors had no specific role in reporting to the Transferors' Representative Council and no designated responsibility as stewards of ethos, including Christian ethos, while in Hollybank, the appointment of foundation-governors has become unclear with the group having no sense of independent identity or role. This is a significant observation given the stated position of both schools on the desirability of staff-governors partnership in ethos-development. The involvement of parent governors, particularly those from mixed-marriages, was specifically mentioned as influential in developing the ethos of the schools.

The curriculum.

Both schools emphasised the importance of the whole curriculum in developing an integrated environment, including appropriate extra-curricular activities. The voluntary nature of these activities was particularly important (Wicklow, 1997), as otherwise there was a danger that pupils and parents felt pressurised into taking part.

Multi-culturalism.

Although accepting the focus remained on integrating the two main communities, both schools claimed that an integrated ethos should embrace other traditions (McGlynn, 2009) and some data was found to support this claim. Even though there was no overarching strategy in this area, both schools appeared to reflect liberal-multiculturalism (McGlynn, 2007), drawing upon a "*salad bowl*", understanding wherein,

> *"the different ingredients are mixed, with the idea that each one confers its distinctive flavour to a pleasing and harmonious whole whose distinctive character is determined by the nature and diversity of its components". (*Esteve, 1992, p. 261*)*

Despite this observation, no discussions had taken place at either school on how to deal with multiculturalism or measure how successful the school had been in addressing other traditions. In the absence of discussion, both schools appeared to be approaching multi-culturalism in the same way as they had previously worked with the two main traditions. The next chapter will consider the data in relation to the second research question.

Chapter 6. Findings: A Christian ethos.

The second research question related to whether there was a specifically Christian element to an integrated ethos and, if so, how that was reflected in school life including whether it was interpreted differently between school types.

The "*essentially Christian*" nature of ethos was established by Lagan College's founders (Bardon, 2009), enshrined in the movement's first Statement of Principles (1989) and affirmed in 2010 in the latest iteration of those principles. Despite the long history of Christian ethos, it is still not universally accepted (O'Connor, 2002), with parents perceptions differing depending on their backgrounds (Smith, 2001), and teachers showing reluctance to engage with it (Donnelly, 2004b). Research has also suggested that the strength of the principal's own faith tradition influenced the school's Christian focus (Macaulay, 2009).

In order to address these areas the interviewees were asked to discuss how they interpreted the Christian nature of ethos in everyday school life.

A Christian ethos was understood ecumenically.

It was first important to see if there was consistency in how the schools interpreted the term '*Christian*', given Darby's (1997) reflection that,

> '*there is a tendency to use the term Protestant and Catholic to reflect ethnic identity as well as private religion. In Northern Ireland, there is nothing incompatible with losing one's religion or faith yet still identifying oneself as Protestant or Catholic*'. (p.45)

Lambkin helpfully reminds us that the two main Christian traditions are understood by some evangelical Protestants (Liechty and Clegg, 2001, p.287), as '*opposite religions still*' (Lambkin, 1996p.28). Given this background, and recognising that '*segregated education [*and marriage*] are the institutions through which the opposite religions paradigm is most fundamentally realised in [*Northern Irish*] society*' (p.47), it was necessary to ensure how the terms 'Christian', 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' were used and interpreted during the research. In brief, it was necessary to be clear in talking to teachers from both traditions '*whether or not they regard one another as Christian*' (p.29).

Protestant members interviewed appeared to use the term '*Protestant*' and '*Christian*' to mean different things. When Protestant members referred to themselves as

'*Christian*', this tended to be understood within that tradition as a statement of personal faith, extending beyond a nominal church link. Those who were no longer active in church generally accepted the term Protestant and rarely used the terms '*atheist*' or '*agnostic*' confirming Bruce's findings that '*Protestants willingly accept a religious label even when their personal commitment might be weak or even non-existent*' (1986, p.17).

Unlike its reformed counterparts the Catholic Church has no denominational fragmentation and, in the main, Catholics appear to concede a more homogenous worldview sometimes termed a "*Catholic philosophy of life*" (Gardner et al, 2006, p.153) containing many "*givens*" (p.152). The term Catholic presumes the epithet Christian (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1993, 3:9) and the researcher noted that the majority of Catholic participants used the terms '*Catholic*' and '*Christian*' almost interchangeably when referring to themselves or their co-religionists. When Catholic members indicated that they were no longer active church members, they mostly referred to themselves as '*lapsed Catholic*' or '*non-practising Catholic*'. The preferred term which they used when talking of other denominations was '*Protestant*' or, occasionally, '*Non-Catholic*'.

This use of terms was familiar to the researcher in his past faith-based, community-relations work and suggests a differentiation between the two traditions on the interpretation of the term '*Christian*' (Lambkin, 1996). It was important, therefore, to be clear from the outset that in the research, the question on Christian ethos was not attached to one denomination and that the term '*Christian*' was being used in an ecumenical sense (ibid, p.35). During the case studies, all members used the term '*Christian*' in an ecumenical sense with no indication of the paradigm modulation suggested by Lambkin (1996, p.45).

A Christian ethos was important but not essential.

There was general consensus that '*essentially Christian*' remained an acceptable summary of the ethos as it not only respected the movement's origins (Bardon, 2009), but it,

> *'...was a clever phrase in terms of it says that we are neither Protestant [nor] Catholic but we hold dear the essential elements of both communities' (teacher Greenlands).*

While accepting that *'essentially Christian'* reflected the historical origins, it was considered to be important, *'but not essential' (teacher Greenlands)* by the majority. Only the principal and one governor of Hollybank believed it should remain essential to an integrated ethos *as 'it adds value to integration'*. Significantly, these two members alone took the opportunity to express strong personal faith commitments during the interviews.

All members preferred to talk about their schools as '*faith-based*', rather than '*essentially Christian*' in character.

> '*I see our school as a faith-based school, which works from a Christian foundation, rather than one which evangelically promotes an exclusively Christian value-base'.* (teacher Greenlands)
>
> *'Faith-based, rather than denomination-based I think that's fair to say'.* (teacher Hollybank)

The distinction involved the difference between,

> ''*promoting Christianity and supporting faith development ... although the school is open to all, the approach to the school is very much on that Christian basis.'* (chair Greenlands)

The chair had some concerns however, as a school which was,

> '*essentially Christian in character... could potentially alienate those from non-Christian religions and no religions*'.

So he believed that ethos should not result in the school,

> *'promoting faith... as schools should educate ... and it is the churches' role to support faith development*'.

He accepted that this was a minority view and did not wish to challenge the religious nature of schools generally, or integrated schools specifically. His apprehension appeared to be based on what seemed to be a form of '*consumerism*', as he believed that the '*removal of the faith basis might have an adverse effect on enrolling Catholic pupils*', whose parents would expect schools to reflect their faith tradition.

The chairperson of Hollybank, self-described as a '*non-practising Catholic*', believed that having a Christian dimension added no significant value and was content that his school,

> '*did not have any religious [*members of religious orders*] on the board [*or*] someone on the board with a strong religious faith telling us that we can't do this or that because of their strong religious faith'.*

This belief appeared to draw on past experience wherein he felt that Hollybank's focus on a '*strong Christian ethos*' had challenged the local Catholic church which feared losing children to Hollybank.

> '*For years a priest wouldn't even visit the school. The kids couldn't make their Holy Communion and confirmation together at the one chapel. They haven't fully embraced us at all*'.

He believed that in '*a multi-cultural age'* the school should demonstrate an ethos reflecting *'the basic principles of common humanity*', or '*the principles which apply to all the world religions*', but felt that such a change would need time to consider. He was not willing to take up this challenge himself, as he recognised, like the chair in Greenlands, that he was a lone voice on the board on this matter.

The chairperson and principal of Hollybank believed some parents were unaware of the school's Christian ethos and that this ignorance led to some parental concerns with the school's Christian focus (Smith, 2001).

> *'this is still a work in progress and there were a few parents who are [still] uncomfortable with it all.' (*principal*)*

The principal was clear, however, that

> *'There are still families that have issues with any religion and wish to have them withdrawn - by all means we will support their right but we're not going to stop [Christian expression} because it upsets them'.*

She pointed out that this position was not new as in the early days,

> *'we had people who were atheists who were outraged and fought tooth and nail because this was a Christian school*'.

In these circumstances the principal claimed that she offered to discuss any concerns and alternatives with the parents and observed that as a consequence no parent had withdrawn children over such concerns.

Principals drove Christian ethos.

Research indicated the important role played by Principals in developing ethos (Donnelly, 1999), and Greenlands' principal accepted that his position of power

allowed him to develop models of what he believed to be acceptable Christian ethos offering a recent example.

> '*There was a poster in the window for the Catholic services that they have on Saturdays, a 24 hour vigil at the local parish church which I put up. I guess it's one of those times when it comes in the office and my gut instinct was to get the staple gun out, the Blue-tack out and put them up everywhere, but then I went, it's a bit too religious. Was it promoting the image that I want around the school?'*

He suggested that on such occasions he tried to involve all staff, so although,

> *'for me it wasn't appropriate to put it everywhere because I think that it might upset some of the Protestant families that are here, so (we talked about it as staff) we were discreet about it. We put it up in areas that we felt were appropriate.'*

The principal of Hollybank accepted she drove the ethos and believed Christianity should remain a core element of an integrated school.

> *'if the Christian ethos was removed, I think it would dilute the sense of identity, of my worth as a Catholic ... a Christian'.*

This view appeared to be predicated on her strong personal faith (Macaulay, 2009, p.5) and despite what she termed the move '*towards a secular society*', she believed that it would be a retrograde step if it was diminished as, '*this was our reference point and even though it is more and more difficult to hang onto*'. Despite the chair's differing view, the principal believed that,

> *'most of the staff and governors believe that a Christian ethos is important as it gives you a relevant reference point'.*

The significance of the principal's position of power was clear when discussing school assemblies, which she believed should be Christian-focused.

> '*I would go to assembly, I would expect the Hollybank prayer which was created by the children, to be said at the end of every assembly and I would expect a reference to a prayer in every assembly, we always sing a Christian-based Hymn*'.

The principal accepted that because all teachers are on the rota to take the assembly, the content of the address could be '*more moral than religious... sometimes the content of the assembly was about an issue which comes up*'. She admitted that including all teachers on the rota was not something she had discussed with them, but was rather an instruction which she '*had laid down informally*'. She

believed that as all pupils are expected to attend, teachers should be willing to set an example for the pupils in this area. She pointed out that although opting out was allowed, no teachers took up this opportunity but when pressed, admitted that if any did, '*it would annoy me*'.

It is perhaps not surprising that no teacher has opted out given the nature of the instruction, the personal views of the principal and her perceived position of power in the school. While no member expressed concern about the rota, it would have been interesting to have spent some time pursuing this area had time permitted.

The Christian ethos is something which the principals of both schools appear to monitor albeit somewhat subjectively and on an *ad hoc* basis, so when issues arose they were discussed at staff or board meetings. For example, one governor in Hollybank raised concerns over the making of the sign of the cross during school prayers, something which Catholic governors believed to be an important faith-related ritual. This governor believed it was '*a practice which was waning*' to the extent that her child '*was too self-conscious to do this in school*' and had raised concerns with the principal who confirmed that it would be discussed at a staff meeting and if necessary at a Board meeting. At the time of the research this had still to be carried out.

Teachers accepted the ethos.

Staff in Hollybank believed that the school demonstrated a Christian ethos, but recognised with Donnelly (2004b) that in day-to-day practice they,

> '*did not talk about [*ethos*]much because probably in this day and age many of the staff don't have any particular faith*'.

The principal agreed that,

> '*because of the nature of society the staff we are getting in are not as religious [as before], so hanging on to that strand of it was difficult*'.

All staff were clear that there was '*no requirement for staff to be Christian in order to work at the school*', even those teaching RE as,

> *'RE's not taught that way and it can't be taught that way given that a number of people who teach it here aren't confessional Christians' (teacher)*

Accordingly there was no requirement that RE teachers needed an RE certificate as in most Catholic primary schools. While accepting that many staff would have no church connections, the principal of Hollybank observed that they assimilated to the

Christian ethos over time (Blakely, 2006), and '*they just deal with it, they see it as a part of the original core of the school*'. Staff at both schools appeared to support this view and accepted the Christian ethos more because it was a founding principle of integrated schools than for reasons of strong personal preference. They remained unclear, however, how this ethos was interpreted (Fraser and Morgan, 1999).

> *'Is Christianity important in Greenlands?' (interviewer)*
>
> *'It is an important as everybody else's faith'. (teacher b)*
>
> *'I think it probably isn't' (teacher a)*
>
> *'Or even another faith. Not just Catholic and Protestant'. (teacher b)*
>
> *'No, I'm not really sure. I don't think that's quite what we represent either if I'm honest'. (teacher a)*
>
> *'It has to be if we're accepting of everybody else's faith, then we should be open' (teacher b)*
>
> *'But that's not actually what we've stated. I mean we do in reality but that's not what integration states, integration purely states within the Protestant and Catholic communities'. (teacher a)*

These diverse views are perhaps not surprising, as teachers in both schools agreed that they had never discussed their schools' Christian ethos.

There was no consistent approach to teaching religion.

The teaching of religion is core to maintaining a Christian ethos within the schools (NICIE, 1989) and it was this area which in Greenlands remained the single biggest point of contention, as no policy was in place. The principal was clear that he has chosen to delay the policy as it '*was too contentious*' (Loughrey et al, 2003). Although aspiring to revisit this gap, it was not in the school plan.

> *'with regards to the delivery of RE to the school, for example, that's been quite a contentious issue which I still, well, we ran out of time with the staff to discuss it to be honest and we want to keep coming back to it because there's still a lot of different opinions'.*

Consequently staff in Greenlands experienced some confusion about what to do with children who opted out of RE or voluntary Christian activities.

> *'What do you do with the kids who opt out of RE?' (interviewer)*

'I've got one in my class and I usually find them alternative activities to do but he doesn't come from a particular faith background that objects to Christianity it's just that his parents just don't particularly want him to' (teacher a)

'Does he just sit in your class then with other kids simply doing something different?' (interviewer)

'Yeah essentially I also think parents haven't given enough thought really to what they want their child to do. I think this... I haven't had this conversation with the parents, it would be interesting to have it but I don't know if they could actually tell me why they don't want their child to attend.' (teacher a)

The staff indicated that in addition to Jehovah's Witnesses (Loughrey et al, 2003) the most likely group to withdraw children would be '*exclusive Christian groups*' like Brethren and not those of other faiths.

'Do you have many children who opt out?' (interviewer)

*'Only exclusive Brethren children. And for example when the [*voluntary*] bible club week was on for foundation stage it was 1 o'clock to 2 o'clock, well a little girl in my class simply didn't go, she went home every day for her lunch'.(teacher c)*

There were also a few families with no faith background who wished to withdraw their children from religious activities. In the absence of any guidance from the parents, or written school policy, the teachers tended to find alternative activities for those who are withdrawn from class, rather than have them '*sit at the back of another class somewhere else*'.

There was also no policy in place on how to deal with the broader issue of religion within Greenlands. Accordingly teachers tended to use their own intuition and to approach the principal to discuss ideas they might have.

'P is heavily involved in promoting Christianity here it's been helpful to me, he's a very good connection to the church, being neighbours we're able to borrow all sorts of things, he's handy to have. But P asked me last week, you know, "is there an assembly policy here? This is my first assembly from the class here and how far can I go? Can I talk about Easter?" I said, "P, I'm not going to guide you on this" '. (principal)

'How did you answer him?' (interviewer)

'I said yes, I have no objection. He said this at Easter, "It's an Easter one and it's called Easter the Easter story", and I told P that's fine, absolutely no problem.' (principal)

Another example illustrates this approach and its unintended consequences.

> '*One of the things that was discussed dealt with a teacher who would be much more Christian than others and who introduced candles into the classroom. She lit a candle, (*and*) it was used as sort of a daily routine to have a little morning prayer with the children, just a good wish for the day kind of thing. I think it was a very simple thing but it did come to light in the staff meeting because a teacher, whose child was in that class has concerns about her, felt that it was one step too far, that it was just going too far. There was also the issue, that for Protestants candles are seen as a Catholic thing.*'

The issue was then taken to the whole staff team for a wider discussion,

> *'We discussed it in the staffroom and there was a general agreement that it did create an image of Catholicism, even the Catholic teachers admitted to that...However I think [*after the discussion*] we all accepted the good intention of the teacher that used it.'*

It was clear that the principal was personally content with this '*common sense approach*' (Montgomery et al, 2003, p.27), but as he did not express his view and offered no space for any discussion on acceptable classroom practice, the appropriateness of the activity was left unresolved for staff, while the principal felt confirmed in enabling style.

> '*I don't know whether she stopped using it or not, although at the end of the day she stands over what she believes and I just felt like saying well, you know, if she wants to do that in her classroom who am I to say no*?'

It appeared that while staff experienced the lack of direction as creating uncertainty, the principal saw his role as '*facilitating discussion'* encouraging staff to *'put their own personal stamp'* on the school's activities, and that any expression of his own view could '*limit staff creativity'*. The lack of communication had resulted in inconsistency in practice and unresolved confusion in the staff.

Members in Hollybank appeared more focused and were attempting to develop a consistent approach, with an RE policy in place. It had recently carried out an RE audit where staff examined how they teach and integrate RE into the school curriculum. During the interviews they were working with the results to ensure a better outcome for the children. One result was that the school took a decision that in order to '*maximise contact and promote pupil integration*' (principal), RE was to be whole classroom-based, except for once a week when classes were divided into three groups, with children separated into Catholics, Protestants and a Social and Moral option for those who had opted out of RE. A minority of staff from both traditions, felt that 'opting out' of RE should be challenged, as the school was understood to be a Christian school with a Christian ethos and that was clearly

explained to all parents when the child was enrolled. Again this was an area which had not been discussed in the school and was left unresolved.

A Christian ethos had visible attributes.

Symbols, emblems and rituals are important within Christianity (Donnelly, 1999), particularly in Catholic and Orthodox traditions and members agreed that a Christian ethos was visible in their schools in RE, sacramental preparation, assemblies, art displays and special events.

> *'There is RE, assemblies with a Christian basis, the sacrament preparation, the visible side of it all. For example, we have a [school] choir [drawn from all children] at our first communion'. (principal Hollybank)*

All members offered similar examples,

> *'On a couple of occasions when I've been down to the school when they've been having an assembly, they have some usual little choruses that you would expect. The Christian festivals are marked, you have Christmas holidays; you have Easter holidays, and all of that'. (chairperson Greenlands)*

One teacher in Hollybank, from a secular school system outside Northern Ireland expressed surprise at these visible elements.

> *'When I taught in a state school in my home country, schools were all about two things, academic achievement and patriotism. I worked in another controlled school before I came here and I couldn't quite work out what it was all about. It was a little bit Christian. When I came here and I saw my first assembly here I remember saying "Oh, they are praying, there was a prayer they are singing". I came from a school where you would never hear a prayer apart from in RE.'*

Neither school had a policy addressing how this area would be developed and members accepted that the extent to which ethos was visible depended on the school year, for example when Christian festivals were visibly celebrated, or on the approach of the individual teacher as classroom practice varied. There was also a consensus that the visible element of ethos was more aligned to the Catholic faith, something considered in the following paragraphs.

There was a conscious recognition of the Catholic tradition.

During the discussions, members talked of an '*inclusive ethos*', which would reflect the two traditions (McEwen, 1999) without agreeing what that might look like. There was, however, more clarity around how a Catholic tradition might be represented

(Marriott, 2001), perhaps because of its more visible nature and the place of ritual and rite within it (Loughrey et al, 2003).

As the Catholic Bishops maintain their own school system, links between integrated schools and local parish churches reflect the nature of local accommodations. At Hollybank, there was a sense that the Catholic Church should be more evident through visits by the local priest. All staff, including Protestants, believed that this would be perceived as a welcoming statement from the Church. Although one Catholic member accepted that this was as much to do with optics, all her Protestant colleagues agreed observing that,

> *'I think that this would be something that the Catholic Church might agree to. It is not even to do with the celebration or anything like that it is just about coming in walking around the school and having a cup of coffee and saying hello'*

Although they were aware that Catholic clergy did not visit the school (Loughrey et al, 2003), staff remained confused over the reason. In the absence of any explanation being offered by senior management, some believed that it had been a church decision not to visit, while others felt it had been a school decision to exclude.

> *'I don't want to sound negative or anything, but I would love visiting clergy in (staff member c)*
>
> *'I think Protestant ministers have been approached and agreed but Catholic clergy have been approached and said no' (staff member a)*
>
> *'My understanding is that it is the older priests who would wouldn't go near integrated schools and the younger generation priests are all for it' (staff member b)*
>
> *'No some younger ones are as bad' (staff member c)*
>
> *'They're not allowed' (staff member a)*

The lack of clarity highlighted a problem with the internal communication on this significant area of school concern, and highlighted the lack of any formal role for the Catholic church in faith formation in integrated schools.

Both schools did, however, actively recognise the Catholic tradition and governors stressed that debates on the Christian ethos included discussions on how to take forward sacramental preparation for Catholic children.

In one case governors of Greenlands had focused on whether children should be withdrawn from class to have sacramental preparation (ibid, p.38). The board

concluded that in order that '*non-Catholic children had some understanding of what the sacraments meant*', children should be prepared partly within shared RE classes and partly on their own. This was confirmed by one governor who observed, '*one of my daughters was prepared both in school time and after school for her first sacrament.'*

Governors of Greenlands were aware that the school had taken part in a recent First Penance event in the local Catholic Church where seven of the 14 pupils involved were Polish. The local Catholic Priest arranged for a Polish-speaking priest to hear their penance in Polish. For the board and the principal, this was a sign of the Christian ethos being practised, demonstrating religious and cultural integration. Teachers added that many parents had expressed positive views about the inclusive nature of this event.

Hollybank also offered sacramental preparation for Catholic children and claimed that although responding to the requirements of Catholic parents, the Church celebrations were inclusive and so,

> *'the whole Hollybank community is invited to the church and the celebrations afterwards on these special days'.*

Such an event took place when First Communion was celebrated in the local parish church for year four pupils. In the past, the Catholic pupils were required to receive the sacrament as individuals in services in their own home churches, which totalled six in number. Over the years and through regular work with the local parish priest, who still refused to come into the school, this provision had changed and now there was one main event for all children (Loughrey et al, 2003, p.39). The main event took place at four p.m. to allow for a good attendance and, as a result, all teachers attended. Staff believed that an important step in recognising the significance of this event within school life had been taken when Catholic teachers, who prepared the children for the sacraments after school hours, were recognised for this work and '*were now given time-off in lieu*'. Staff acknowledged that was a new development which went some way to mark acceptance of this activity as a core element of school life.

The only issue which arose during the whole process, was when, in an attempt to bring a degree of commonality to the procedure and reduce unnecessary expense,

the principal had tried to set a unilateral policy on the style and type of dresses to be worn. This suggestion did not go through any parental consultation process due to the timing of the event and created a '*significant backlash from parents*' and was subsequently withdrawn. As with Donnelly's example relating to confusion over pupils taking the Ash on Ash Wednesday (2004b), there were no follow-up discussion about learning from the experience, confirming the absence of any formal mechanism to monitor and review ethos.

Hollybank now hosts the First Penance for year three Catholic pupils from all the local controlled schools. Following the service Catholic pupils re-enact the occasion in the assembly to share with their peers. The physical act of coming together at a shared Christian event which included some Protestant families was seen by all members to be a key defining event in the life of the school. In addition '*it allows Catholic families to see that the school is accepted by the Catholic Church*' (teacher).

The role of the Protestant churches was ambiguous.

Unlike the role of the Catholic Church, the place of the Protestant churches in integrated schools is defined (TRC, 1988), as they retain two transferor-governors on transformed school's boards. One governor of Greenlands, supporting Ellis (2006), suggested that the Christian ethos was stewarded by the two transferor-representatives whom she understood '*represented the views of Protestant churches on the board*'. However, even prior to transformation there was no evidence that transferor-representatives met separately or, contrary to Ellis' aspirations, that they even desired to carry out such a discrete function. This evidence remains anecdotal as no transferor-representative took part in the research.

As Greenlands had previous strong links to local Protestant churches, staff considered continued contact with those churches as one indicator of their ongoing partnership. Staff felt that the local Protestant congregations were no longer involved in any way with the school and did not appear to promote it within their congregations. The view of the longer-serving teachers was that church contact had waned but there was no consensus on why this had happened. Some felt this might have more to do with the changing nature of society than the transformation of the school,

> *'Do you not think that, you know, Sunday schools and church involvement has just decreased a lot?' (teacher c)*

'I think part of it has to do with the change in our church make-up because now there are fewer people living in the immediate locality'.(teacher a)

Some of the longer-serving staff saw this lack of church contact as

'ironic ... as the religious life of the school had been raised to a more overt level since transforming to integrated status'.

One teacher who attended a local Presbyterian church, stated that he had never heard his church promote the school, something he considered,

'odd as the school was perceived as the local community primary school. Well I go to the local Presbyterian and there's not a single child goes to church there who comes here. The interesting side is, people who have come through my church - the ones younger than me, you know, - they also came through the school and it stopped somewhere along the line.'

There may be other reasons for the reduction in contact with Protestant churches such as a perceived loss of a former 'Protestant school', the reduction in the number of transferor representatives following transformation or even the personal interests of local clergy.

So, despite the aspiration to steward a Christian ethos, no strategic conversations had taken place in Greenlands about the role transferor-representatives or local Protestant churches might play in ethos development.

There was a perceived 'Protestant deficit'.

Apart from church links, research suggests that it is easier to represent the Catholic tradition than Protestantism (Coombs, 2002), perhaps due to the diverse nature of the Reformed traditions (Loughrey et al, 2003). Recognising that there was a considerable emphasis placed on Catholic faith development, Greenlands had considered how to address this asymmetry for Protestant children (Bekerman and Zembylas, 2009) and as a result had arranged for an external agency from a Protestant tradition to run a week-long Bible club, open to all children. This was established on an after-school basis, allowing for voluntarism on the part of the parents and children involved, important for the principal as '*this allows parents to choose whether or not they want their child to take part*'. It was attended by large numbers of children from both traditions.

During the discussions on the setting up of the Bible-club, one new teacher from a Protestant background, identifying himself as a Christian rather than a Protestant,

observed that such a Bible-club (often called a Scripture Union) was common in controlled schools. The teacher observed that for him, '*a Christian from a Protestant background*', a school club which taught the bible and involved Christian activities such as singing, drama and art, represented an element of his tradition. For him, its absence left a perceived '*Protestant deficit*' (McGlynn et al, 2004), which was all the more obvious when he saw intentional representations of the Catholic faith tradition.

> *'one of the things that impacted me about here is that there isn't actually a Scripture Union. I think that would be one thing that is lacking. Yes I am speaking from a Christian background but I also think that the catholic tradition is celebrated much more openly than the Protestant. Now it's a lot easier to do because there are rites of passage along the way that are more publicly obvious for the Roman Catholic tradition than there is for the Protestant, there just isn't the same kind of rites of passage for children. There is not anything that I would say says 'we are about Protestant Christians'.*

Catholic colleagues appeared to have never considered such an activity before as it was not seen as part of their tradition, but offered no objection. The principal commented that although he had never received any such request, he would support the idea of such a club,

> *'I wouldn't have a problem with that, if that's what they wanted to run and children wanted to attend it by all means'.*

In subsequent discussions this teacher was vocal in representing his Christian views, so his failure to raise the issue was more likely to be around priorities than avoidance, and also reflecting the fact that he was not in permanent employment. This would have been an interesting area to have followed up with the teacher had time permitted.

All teachers agreed that ceremony and celebration were important elements of a Christian ethos supporting the views of Bekerman who observed that how a tradition is represented, including the place of ceremony and celebration, was an important element in shared education as,

> *'through symbolic activity, those ceremonies attempt to draw the attention of their participants to new objects of thought and emotions held to be of special significance to transform both the actors and the audience'.* (2004, p.585)

During discussions on the perceived '*Protestant deficit*', many teachers felt the asymmetry should be addressed by '*creating something for Protestants*'. Bekerman's observations on addressing asymmetry in Jewish-Muslim joint school context are

relevant here, as he concluded that it was not sufficient to create something new for the tradition which appears to be in deficit as,

> '*while the effort to balance initial asymmetry might be laudable, serious approaches to multi-culturalism cannot afford artificial creations*'. (p.592)

Instead, it was necessary to consider a longer term solution '*spread over the school year and across multiple disciplines [*not just RE*]*' (p.603), which addressed the broad issues of inclusivity, symmetry and mutual respect.

No debate had taken place in ether school where options to address this deficit might be explored within a whole-school context. Such a discussion, reflecting Bekerman's observations, could be of significant help in moving the debate forward and would also have resonance for the next section in this chapter on dealing with other faith traditions.

The ethos should be welcoming of other faiths.

Smith (2001) and McGlynn (2003) had raised concerns about how successful a Christian ethos might be in including those of other faiths and this was pursued during the research. There was consensus that demonstrating a Christian ethos should be compatible with including and welcoming pupils from all faiths and none. Both school communities agreed that educating about other faiths was,

> '*a moral and sensible thing to do if children are to be empowered to live in an increasingly multi-cultural world*' (teacher Hollybank).

Both schools claimed to address this in practice. Greenlands' development plan recognised the growth in other faiths at the school.

> '*The school has children from Muslim, Buddhist, [*exclusive*] Brethren backgrounds as well as the main two traditions in Northern Ireland. Many families now identify themselves as in mixed religious relationships, or declare themselves as 'none' or 'other Christian*'.

As a consequence, the school claimed that it was intentional about including those from other faiths.

> '*We approach sensitively the teaching of religion to ensure that the school has a Christian ethos, although we welcome children of non-Christian religions and of no religion. We aspire to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged and accepted as valued members of the school community'.(Greenland's integration policy, p.2)*

The inclusive nature of the Christian ethos was similarly reflected in Hollybank's Integration Policy (2010) which explained that,

> *'while [*the school is*] Christian in ethos, we aspire to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged and accepted as valued members of the school community'*

Both principals stated that a Christian ethos facilitated such aims and believed that evidence to support success in this area was found in the growing numbers of 'others' enrolled. The implication seemed to be that if the schools were not welcoming of other faiths, then why were they joining in increasing numbers? This, however, remains only one interpretation, as those new families and children have never been asked for their views on how they experienced school ethos. In addition, the increase in 'others' might be ascribed as much to other factors such as personal recommendation, reputation and results, as to a perceived '*inclusive Christian ethos*'.

The way in which the teachers at Greenlands dealt with other faiths was left largely to the individual teacher and, as a result, staff expressed some concern about how to include teaching on other faiths while retaining the Christian character of the school. For example, there was no agreed view on whether or not Christianity was to be taught confessionally as the 'true' faith (Lambkin, 1996) or comparatively, being explained as one of many faiths. The strongest views expressed against teaching faith on a comparative basis came from two Protestant staff members who described themselves as Christian. One had concerns about age-appropriateness,

> *'(a wider debate) was something I think we need to have, we have discussed it as a staff before, because I know there would be some differences of opinion. I teach P1 and I'm not keen on the notion of introducing other faiths [*this early*].' (teacher a)*

The other expressed a theological concern about teaching other faiths comparatively.

> *'I think, for example, someone coming from a Hindu context, who came in and told the story of Ganesh and left the children with that as their passing thought having set it up as, 'this is equal to you talking about your God, I talk about mine' I would struggle with that theologically. I don't actually feel that necessarily that schools are exclusively Christian in that sense but at the same time if you're asking if I'm happy with that then no. Having said that, I don't know if we teach the notion of Christianity as the true faith. I would be quite careful in my classroom to say 'the bible says' it's up to them to decide if they believe the bible. Now, I personally believe it and if they ask me I don't mind telling them that' (teacher b)*

Other teachers appeared content to deal with other faiths in the broad context of RE without similar caveats being expressed. Once again this difference reflected

research on how Protestantism, particularly reformed traditions, viewed other faiths as not part of '*the one true religion*' (Lambkin, 1996, p.42), and reflected the fact that no whole school discussion had taken place on the approach to other faiths.

Staff and governors in Hollybank had accepted that RE was not taught confessionally within the school, but had '*avoided potential confusion between faith and fact*' (teacher) by teaching other faiths only at Key Stage 2 (8-11 years old). There remained differing albeit not strongly oppositional views on whether Christianity would be presented as the default faith tradition or as a comparative faith.

Despite this lack of clarity, all teachers in both schools agreed that changes in enrolment patterns had resulted in intentionally addressing faith diversity within ethos. Supporting the findings of Loughrey et al (2003), teachers were able to offer examples of teaching on other faith-festivals, facilitating inter-cultural food days and using colleagues from other traditions to address their pupils. Both principals had offered parents from other faiths the opportunity to come into school and to share their backgrounds and beliefs. All staff indicated that they would also encourage older pupils to share their own faith experiences.

The principal of Hollybank saw a Christian ethos as inclusive and stated that the school took a pro-active stance relating to the celebration of other faiths. This appeared to relate to events, celebration and instruction on other faiths.

> '*We do celebrate Chinese New Year, Diwali, and Ramadan. We have a classroom assistant who is Muslim and she would talk to the children about it.*'

She also highlighted one area where she felt she had taken steps to support an '*inclusive Christian approach*' to children of another faith background. There had always been a number of families from a Jehovah's Witness tradition involved in the school, but who traditionally have opted-out of anything reflecting Christian teaching (Loughrey et al, 2003). After some discussions, she had,

> '*reached a compromise where they are quite happy for the child to participate (*at assembly*) and be here to listen to another ones point of view. They stay for the assemblies but tend to opt out of RE*'.

In order to ensure that this opting out was not synonymous with withdrawal and isolation, the principal pointed out that there was

> '*a social and moral option which tends to suit those families who are uncomfortable with the Christian issue*'.

She recognised that even with such a provision, opting out still caused some problems as,

> '*the big issue tends to come when we have the nativity when the whole school was talking about the baby Jesus from one end of the day to the next. They* [the pupils who opt out] *do have to be reallocated to somewhere else or have a classroom assistant do something with them*'.

One governor at Hollybank offered another interesting example of inclusivity when in the past year the school had provided funding to allow an Orthodox priest to visit the school to teach the young Orthodox pupils within RE. Orthodox Christianity is the third main Christian tradition alongside Protestant and Catholic and has some significant differences from both. It is a small group in Northern Ireland, with a visual faith representation (icons, pictures, incense) much like that of its Catholic counterpart and has one member on the school's board. Some governors had questioned this event, expressing concern that allowing the practice to develop might establish a precedent. The apprehension seemed to be around the resourcing, that is, removing small numbers of children from class and the potential for other smaller groups to seek similar treatment with the added pressures that might put on the curriculum and the staff, as opposed to any concerns with Orthodoxy itself. Such concern, however, has to be set within the context of the aspiration to offer an inclusive Christian ethos and the practicalities of delivering this intention where there are small, minority faith groups. It also reflected the need for a whole school discussion on the matter and a possible agreement on what an inclusive Christian ethos looks like in practice.

Once again, how to include other faiths is an area which indicated the iterative nature of developing integrated practice, and the fact that no substantive discussions had taken place in either school on how the matter of other faiths would be approached has left confusion amongst staff. Although reflecting a mainly liberal approach to multi-culturalism by '*celebrating difference*', there was no sense that any discussions had been contextualised within McGlynn's observed categories (2009). In the absence of any strategy, it appeared inevitable that other faiths were dealt with through the same processes and procedures which the school had followed when addressing the two main traditions, that is by the individual teacher using their own

experience and intuition. Once more, this left room for significant diversity of approach and inconsistency in teaching.

Differences in understanding and applying a Christian ethos.

During the interviews few differences emerged in how the two schools understood a Christian ethos. Only the principal and one governor of Hollybank felt that a Christian ethos should remain an essential characteristic of all integrated schools. Those views reflected the fact that the two individuals demonstrated a strong personal faith background rather than indicating a philosophical difference between the two school types, contra Marriott (2001).

Although Greenlands had less well developed policies and practice than Hollybank, this appeared to be linked to their experience of '*the journey to integration*', contra Loughrey et al (2003). There were also some examples of avoidance where the principal of Greenlands admitted that developing an RE policy had not been a priority for him as it was a difficult area to address (Donnelly, 2004b). In the absence of a policy, teachers tended to use their intuition and to approach the principal to discuss ideas they might have. This situation appeared as much to reflect the principal's own approach as the transformation process which Greenlands is going through.
Hollybank had more formal policies and procedures in place and had taken the decision that in order to maximise contact and promote pupil integration, RE was to be whole-classroom based, with the exception of once a week, when the classes were divided into three groups. The school had also introduced some Christian based, extracurricular activities, including a Bible Club, facilitated by an external agency from a Protestant tradition.
Again the differences seemed to be linked to the personality of the principals and there was no evidence of an underlying philosophical difference between the two school types.

During the discussions in Greenlands, it became clear that one way in which the staff tested the Christian ethos of the school was the level of local church support for the school and the amount of regular contact with the local churches. This was not a part of Hollybank's measurement procedure and reflected that historically, Greenlands had strong links with the local Protestant churches and were interested to see if this link had reduced since taking on integrated status.

Finally, staff in Hollybank seemed more content to teach other faiths in a comparative way, albeit at Key Stage 2, whereas there was a small yet vocal minority of teachers in Greenlands who expressed concerns about this approach. This difference appeared to reflect the theological backgrounds and views of individual staff, rather than anything to do with the school types.

Summary.

There was no significant difference between school types on how the Christian ethos was stated or interpreted, with any variances reflective of the personal style of the principals and the fact that Greenlands was still on a 'journey into integration', rather than emerging from any philosophical differences in school type.

It was an inclusive, faith-based ethos which was still important.

There was agreement that while a Christian ethos remained important it was not essential in maintaining an integrated ethos. The view emerged that integrated schools were faith-based schools, reflecting a multi-denominational approach to embracing other faiths (Smith 2001).

The role of the Protestant church was ambiguous.

Despite the Protestant Churches' Transferors retaining a statutory role in governance in the transformed Greenlands, the two remaining transferor-governors appeared to have no specific role in stewarding Christian ethos either within the governing body, or in terms of reporting to the appointing body, the TRC.

The Christian ethos was asymmetrical.

There was a view that the celebration of traditions was asymmetrical, with a perceived Protestant deficit. Most attempts to address this gap, had tried to 'add something for Protestants', rather than consider how a strategic whole school approach might deal with the two traditions (Bekerman, 2004).

The place of RE in developing a Christian ethos was unclear.

Greenlands had no policy and, consequently, teachers had no strategic context in which to monitor their classroom practice. Although Hollybank had a policy, the question of what to do with those pupils who 'opted out' remained ambiguous in both schools, as it appeared no agreement had been reached in either school on a policy

position.

There was no agreement on teaching about other faiths or cultures.
There was no agreement on whether Christianity would be presented as the school's default faith or comparatively, and no discussions had taken place on how to develop a multi-faith or multi-cultural environment, with both schools dealing with these areas in much the same way as they did the two main traditions through *'celebrating difference'*.

In the final chapter, the emerging issues will be discussed together with their implications for integrated schools. There will also be some suggestions for further research. In addition, reference will be made to some difficulties in the research process, the researchers own struggle with authenticity and advocacy, and the personal learning as a result of the process.

Chapter 7. Discussion and conclusions.

Introduction.

This research addressed the following two areas.

a) To explore how key stakeholders in integrated schools understand an integrated ethos and its application in practice.

b) To explore whether there is an aspect of this integrated ethos which might be described as a 'Christian ethos' and, if so, how that is reflected in school life, including whether or not it is perceived and applied differently between controlled and grant maintained integrated schools.

This chapter will present an overview of the key findings, identify emerging issues, appropriately linked to existing literature. It will then comment on the implications of the findings, offer suggestions for future research and conclude with a reflection on personal learning.

Key Findings.

The research identifies a number of key issues addressing the nature of a specifically integrated ethos as follows:

There was no fundamental difference between the two school types.

The case studies did not support the conclusions of Marriott (2001) or Loughrey et al (2003) that there was a fundamental difference in ethos between the two school types. The main disparity lay in the area of policies and procedures which were much better developed in the GMI Hollybank, a situation which reflected more on the approach of the individual principal and Greenlands' current position on its *'journey to integration'* than on any philosophical differences. In fact, the extent of congruence in school approaches was all the more significant given the fact that the two principals shared nothing by way of community background, gender, prior integrated experience or personal expressions of faith.

There was a consistent view on what constituted an integrated ethos.

The case studies add to the literature by suggesting, that a specifically integrated ethos does exist (contra Dawson, 2003 and Loughrey et al, 2003) and that it is a

conscious, identifiable construct (contra Whitehead, 2006). At a *'stated'* level, it was identified at a number of levels of school life including shared stewardship, high levels of parent and governor involvement, an intentional balance in intake, relevant policies and practices addressing contentious issues, strong collegiate relationships and an inclusive approach to multi-culturalism. At an interpreted level, however, there was little evidence of shared stewardship, supporting Donnelly's observations (1999) and a lack of consistency in approaching and addressing contentious matters. Although both schools accepted that their prime focus remained educating Protestant and Catholic children together, all claimed that this ethos pro-actively reached out to a wider and more diverse group, including children with different cultures and faiths.

There was no consistent approach to ethos development or stewardship.
Although the research generally supported the literature in this area, it suggests that part of the reason for such inconsistencies might link both role confusion and abdication of responsibilities. Although aspiring to oversee ethos development, governors in both schools agreed that it was the principal, under the delegated authority of the board, who effectively created and stewarded the ethos through decisions they took and policies they established. Despite this delegated role, neither school had any mechanism through which the principal could measure or report back to the board on ethos, so governors remained ignorant of how ethos was being experienced. In addition to this abdication of board responsibility in stewarding ethos there was also some role confusion, in that despite both schools having sub-groups charged with stewarding ethos, neither caucus had met separately nor had expressed any desire to meet outside the board. This left the role and function of transferor and foundation governors both vague and devoid of any influence in this area.
In addition, it emerged that both principals and most governors believed that parent-governors, particularly those in *'mixed religion'* marriages could offer 'value-added' in terms of reflecting on and stewarding an integrated ethos. Although this point was agreed by all, no discussion had ever taken place to determine how it might be developed.

A Christian ethos although important, was not essential.
Although all members felt that a Christian ethos should remain an important and significant element of an integrated ethos, only a small minority believed it should still remain essential. There was no significant difference between school types on how the Christian ethos was stated or interpreted, with teachers in both schools

highlighting a lack of clarity on what constituted good and acceptable practice in dealing with some areas of that Christian ethos (McGlynn and Bekerman, 2006, p.7). There was the general view that integrated schools were understood to be inclusive, faith-based schools, which reflected a liberal-multicultural approach to other traditions (McGlynn, 2009) and a multi-denominational approach to embracing other faiths (Smith 2001).

The role of the Protestant church was ambiguous.

Despite the TRC retaining a statutory role in governance in Greenlands, the two transferor-governors appeared to have no specific role in stewarding Christian ethos either within the governing body or in terms of reporting to the appointing body, the TRC. In addition, since transformation and despite a strong past record of partnership working, the local Protestant churches appeared to have disengaged with the school. This left the school in an ambiguous position given it remained a '*Church-related school*'. (Ellis, 2006)

The Christian ethos was asymmetrical.

Emerging from the previous observation was the view that the celebration of traditions was asymmetrical, with a perceived Protestant deficit. Although some attempts had been taken to address this gap, the tendency was to '*add something for Protestants*' rather than consider how a strategic whole-school approach might deal with the two traditions (Bekerman, 2004). Although this deficit was experienced by Protestant staff members, it had not been picked up by Catholic colleagues, as it had never been discussed.

The place of RE in developing a Christian ethos was unclear.

Although both schools approached RE with a stated broad, inclusive philosophy, Greenlands had no policy and consequently teachers had no strategic context in which to monitor their classroom practice. The question of what to do with pupils who 'opted out' remained ambiguous in both schools as neither had reached an agreed policy position.

There was no agreed approach to teaching other faiths.

Although staff members at both schools were clear that a Christian ethos did not preclude teaching about other faiths, there was no agreement on whether Christianity should be presented as the school's default faith tradition or as a comparative faith. When this subject was raised during the research, it appeared to be a new area,

never before discussed in either school. No discussions had taken place on how to develop a multi-faith or multi-cultural environment, with both schools dealing with these areas in much the same way as they did the two main traditions through *'celebrating difference'*.

Ethos needs to be agreed, communicated and monitored.

This final observation summarises a number of the anomalies already mentioned. While it was clear that both schools had a similar, intentional approach to delivering an integrated ethos, the potential impact of this ethos was diminished because of an inconsistent interpretation and application. Much of this was attributable to a combination of poor communication, diverse management styles, lack of reflective practice, policy deficit, role confusion, competing priorities and the lack of space wherein strategic discussions on ethos could take place. It appeared therefore to be a deficit due more to a lack of prioritisation on the part of the board and principals than active avoidance of the matter. Nonetheless the result was that the integrated ethos, which both schools claimed as a conscious construct, was not being fully and consistently interpreted in school practice and therefore its potential impact was diminished.

Areas for future research.

Following on from the key findings, a number of issues emerged for which scant research evidence exists.

a) Neither school had any clear measures on how to monitor an integrated ethos, including the Christian element. This is an area which would be interesting to pursue as, unless ethos is tracked, its success cannot be measured and emerging good practice cannot be captured and shared.

b) The case studies highlighted the potential '*value-added*' role which parent-governors, particularly those from mixed-religion marriages, could play in stewarding the ethos of the schools. This is an area which does not appear to have been the focus of any previous research and would be interesting, given the role of parents in the development of integrated schools.

c) It became apparent that the role of foundation and transferor-governors was unclear. The groups had not met separately and the nature of their representative roles in stewarding ethos was at best unclear and at worst

non-existent. As a result, the group had no sense of independent identity in terms of stewarding ethos. This is an area which could be usefully followed up, perhaps incorporating an understanding of the role of the Protestant churches, something which also remains ambiguous.

d) A consensus appeared to exist on areas of school life which constituted an integrated ethos. As this was a small case study, located in primary schools, further research might be taken forward in the post-primary sector to see if there is agreement there.

e) The intentional promotion of the Catholic faith was perceived by some teachers to be asymmetrical and caused pertinent questions to be raised around how an integrated school can represent the more diverse Protestant traditions. This could be usefully researched in the light of Bekerman's observations (2004).

f) There were differences of opinion on how teaching about other faiths was addressed within the schools, with no agreement on whether Christianity should be accepted as the default faith tradition of the school or one of a number of comparative faiths within the school curriculum. There was also no consensus on how to develop a multi-cultural or multi-faith environment, with the schools apparently dealing with these areas in the same way as the existing Protestant- Catholic integrated processes. This is an area of increasing importance and an area in which research might be considered.

Implications for the integrated sector.

Monitoring ethos.

The research highlighted a gap in how schools monitor ethos. A project designed to assist schools in monitoring their ethos has been taken forward by the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), and the integrated school movement might wish to consider whether or not this could be developed further into a self evaluation tool-kit using best practice examples.

Stewarding ethos.

The role confusion which emerged in relation to the two specific sub-groups is significant, as every GMI school has six places reserved for foundation governors,

and each controlled integrated school has two transferor members. NICIE might wish to visit the nature and role of foundation-governors (and the TRC, similarly, explore the nature and role of transferor-representatives), in developing and stewarding ethos.

Policies and practice.

The two case studies raised some issues where the lack of policies on dealing with difficult subjects left teachers to determine their own approaches, which were neither peer-moderated nor consistent in their application (Marriott, 2001). There might be merit in NICIE exploring how integrated schools deal with contentious issues in their policies, procedures, teacher training and practices, and, crucially, whether or not any model of best practice exists which could be shared.

The Protestant deficit.

As research suggests that developing an inclusive ethos should not be limited to a range of individual ceremonies or events but, rather, be set within a whole-school policy context, this is an area of significance in developing an integrated ethos and is one which NICIE could usefully address. It could include the role that Protestant churches might play in transforming schools.

The Christian ethos and other faiths.

The writer believes that this is an area which merits further research and discussion within the integrated sector, as Bekerman (2004), writing within the context of Arab-Israeli shared schools, succinctly highlighted the danger of a well-intentioned, although ultimately asymmetrical and potentially less effective, approach to developing a multi-cultural environment. Although some examples of good practice in response to cultural diversity exist (McGlynn, 2008), more focus in this area might be helpful.

Personal learning.

The researcher had no involvement with integrated schools since 2009, so going back to carry out research in an area where he had spent 15 years was both rewarding and challenging. Challenging, in the sense of the need to constantly reflect on his previous role and potential bias which that might bring. Rewarding, as this is an area in which the researcher has a considerable personal interest and has invested a significant period of his career. The intentional approach towards building an integrated ethos was encouraging, while the inconsistent practice which resulted

from policy deficits was frustrating. The fact that both schools were actively considering the role of Christianity in a multi-faith society offered the researcher comfort, as this had been an area of his own prior interest. Perhaps the greatest learning for the researcher was the view that a robust commitment to '*the journey was as important as the final destination*' (teacher Greenlands).

Final reflections.

The two case studies have identified a range of issues which deserve thorough, detailed discussion within the integrated movement, as well as further exploration through targeted research.

They highlighted the central role of the principal in managing ethos and the potential issues that this raises for continuity of ethos development, stewardship and succession planning.

The research has also identified the need to consider the nature, role and responsibilities of transferor and foundation governors in stewarding ethos and how teachers address difficult subjects.

It has also raised some issues relating to the place of Christianity in an integrated ethos, a perceived 'Protestant deficit' and how faith-based integrated schools can best respond to an increasingly multi-faith and multi-cultural society within that ethos.

In the end, all those interviewed agreed that developing an integrated ethos should be seen as a journey, rather than a destination. As one board member put it,

> *'It's never going to be finished, we're constantly learning, constantly developing. You can't sit back and say, here we are, we've got here'.*

References

Abbott, L. (2010) 'Northern Ireland's integrated schools enabling inclusion: a new interpretation?' *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 14(8), pp.843-859.

Abbott, L. Dunn, S. and Morgan, V. (1999) *Integrated Education in Northern Ireland: An analytical literature review. Research Report No. 15.* Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster.

Aberbach, J.D. and Rockman, B.A. (2002) 'Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews'. *PS: Political Science and Politics,* 35(4), pp.673-676.

Akenson, D.H. (1970) *The Irish Education Experiment*, London, Routledge and Keegan Paul.

Akenson, D.H. (1973) *Education and Enmity: The Control of Schooling in Northern Ireland 1920-1950*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles.

All Children Together (1976) *ACT on Shared Schools*: *Policy Document*, Belfast, ACT.

Allder, M. (1993) 'The meaning of school ethos', *Westminster Studies in Education*, 16, pp.59–69.

Allport, G. W. (1954) *The Nature of Prejudice*, Cambridge, MA, Perseus Books.

Ambert, A.M., Adler, P.A., Adler, P. and Detzner, D.F. (1995) 'Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative research', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 57(4) pp.879-893.

Atkinson, N. (1969) *Irish Education: A History of Educational Institutions*, Dublin, Allen Figgis.

Atkinson, P. and Silverman, D. (1997) 'Kundera's Immortality: The interview society and the invention of self'. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3, pp.304-25.

Bardon, J. (2009) *The Struggle for Shared Schools in Northern Ireland: The History of All Children Together*, Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation.

Barr, I. (2000) 'Planning for ethos', in Furlong, C. and Monahan, L. (Eds.) *School Culture and Ethos: Cracking the code*, Dublin, Marion Institute of Education, pp.129-140.

Bekermann, Z. (2004) 'Potential and Limitations of Multicultural Education in Conflict-Ridden Areas: Bilingual Palestinian-Jewish Schools in Israel'. *Teachers College Record* Vol 106: 3 pp.575-610.

Blakley, L. (2006) Rites of Passage: The Role of Induction in the Enculturation of Beginning Teachers. University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations, Paper 379. University of New Orleans.

Boldt, G. (2000) 'A vantage point of values - findings from the school culture and ethos survey questionnaire', in Furlong, C. and Monahan, L. (Eds.) *School Culture and Ethos: Cracking the code*, Dublin, Marion Institute of Education, pp. 29-42.

Bragg, S., Allington, D., Simmons, K. and Jones, K. (2011) 'Core values, education and research: A response to Mark Pike'. *Oxford Review of Education* 37(4), pp.561-565.

Bragg, S. and Manchester, H. (2011) *Creativity, School Ethos and the Creative Partnerships programme Final Report of the project: Evaluation of the nature and impact of the Creative Partnerships programme on school ethos, 2009-10.* Open University.

British Educational Research Association (2004) *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, London, BERA.

Brown, R. and Hewstone, M. (2005) 'An integrative theory of intergroup contact'. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology,* 37, pp.255–343.

Bruce, S. (1986) *God save Ulster; the religion and practice of Paisleyism,* London, Oxford University Press.

Bruce, S. (1994) *The Ulster Loyalist Political Vision*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (1998) 'Quantitative and qualitative research strategies', in May, T. and Williams, M. (Eds.) *Knowing the Social World*, Buckingham, Open University Press, pp. 138-156.

Buckland, P. (1979) *The Factory of Grievances, Devolved Government in Northern Ireland 1921-1939*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan.

Burgess, R.G. (1985) *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, Lewes, Falmer.

Burgess, R.G. (2000*) In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*, London, Routledge.

Cabinet Office Documents (2004) *The Magenta Book, Guidance Notes for Policy Evaluation and Analysis*, London, Cabinet Office.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1993) Latin text copyright (c), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta del Vaticano.

Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (2001a) *Building Peace, Shaping the Future*, Armagh, Ara Coeli.

Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (2001b) *Life to the full: A Vision of Catholic Education*, Armagh, Ara Coeli.

Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (2001c) *Proclaiming the Mission: The Distinctive Values and Philosophy of Catholic Education*. Armagh, Ara Coeli.

Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland (2008) *Vision 2008*. Irish Bishop's Conference, Pastoral Letter, Maynooth.

Catholic Education Service (1999) *Recommended Ethos Statement*. http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/ianbeck/ethos.html (Last accessed 5 October 2010).

Central Community Relations Unit. http://www.ccruni.gov.uk/relations/relations.htm (Last accessed June 2011).

Chadwick, P. (1994) *Schools of Reconciliation: Issues in Joint Roman Catholic - Anglican Education*, London, Cassell.

Clough, P. and Nutbrown, C. (2006) *A Student's Guide to Methodology*, London, Sage.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2003) (3rd Edition) *Research Methods in Education*, London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Conway, W. (1970) *Catholic Schools*, Dublin, Veritas.

Coombs, A. (2002) A comparison of religious beliefs and values amongst schools in Northern Ireland, Unpublished M.Ed. dissertation, Belfast, Queens University.

Creswell, J.W. and Miller, D.L. (2000) 'Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry', *Theory into Practice,* 39(3), pp.124-130.

Crick, D. R. (2002) *Transforming Visions Managing Values in Schools: A Case Study,* London, Middlesex University Press.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process.* London, Sage.

Darby, J. (1997) *Scorpions in a Bottle: Conflicting Cultures in Northern Ireland*, London, Minority Rights Publication.

Darby, J. and Dunn, S. (1987) 'Segregated Schools: The Research Evidence', in Osborne, R.D., Cormack, R.J. and Miller, R.L. (Eds.) *Education and Policy in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Policy Research Institute, pp. 85-98.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1996) *Solving the dilemma of teacher supply, demand and standards: How we can ensure a competent, caring and qualified teacher for every child.* New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Dawson, D. (2003) The Head Teacher and School Ethos, Swindon, unpublished research.

Denzin, N. K. and. Lincoln, Y. S (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* London, Sage.

Department for Education and Employment (2001) *Schools: Building on success*, London, DfEE.

Department of Education (Nov 1998), *Towards a Culture of Tolerance: Integrating Education. Working Party Progress Report*, Bangor, Department of Education.

Department of Education (2005) *Transformation: An information pack for schools*, Bangor, Department of Education.

Department of Education (2007) *RPA papers: Sectoral Support,* Bangor, Department of Education.

Department for Education and Employment (2001) *Schools Building On Success*. London, The Stationery Office.

Donnelly, C. (1999) 'School ethos and governor relationships'. *School leadership and Management,* 19(2) pp.223-239.

Donnelly, C. (2000) 'In pursuit of school ethos', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 48(2), pp.134-154.

Donnelly, C. (2004a) 'What price harmony? Teachers' methods of delivering an ethos of tolerance and respect for diversity in an integrated school in Northern Ireland', *Educational Research*, 46(1), pp.3-16.

Donnelly, C. (2004b) 'Constructing the ethos of tolerance and respect in an integrated school: the role of teachers'. *British Educational Research Journal* 30 (2), pp.263-278.

Donnelly, C. and Hughes, J. (2006) 'Contact, culture and context: Evidence from mixed faith schools in Northern Ireland and Israel'. *Comparative Education,* 42(4), pp.493-516.

Drudy, S. and Lynch, K. (1993) *Schools and Society in Ireland*, Dublin, Gill and Macmillan.

Dunn, S., Morgan, V., Cairns, E. and Bowring-Carr, C. (1990) *All the Things We Are: Curriculum and Culture in Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland*, Coleraine, Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster.

Dunn, S. (1989) 'Integrated schools in Northern Ireland', *Oxford Review of Education*, 15(2), pp.121-127.

Dunn, S (1990) *A Short History of Northern Ireland, 1920 -1990 Annex B. Fifteenth Report of the Standing Advisory on Human Rights House of Commons Paper 459*, London, HMSO.

Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order (1989) No 2406 (N120), Belfast, HMSO.

Eisner, E. (1994) *Ethos and Education*: A paper presented at the Scottish Consultative Council's Curriculum Conference on Climate and Ethos, Scotland.

Ellis, I. (2006) 'Integrated education: A Northern perspective', *Search*, 29(3), pp.216-227.

Etherington, K. (2007) 'Ethical research in reflexive relationships', *Qualitative Inquiry,* 13, pp.599-616.

Esteve, J. M. (1992) 'Multicultural Education in Spain; the Autonomous Communities face the Challenge of European Unity', *Educational Review,* 44(3), pp.255-272.

Farren, S. (1986) 'Nationalist-Catholic reaction to educational reform in Northern Ireland', 1920-30, *History of Education*, 15(1), pp.19-30.

Farren, S. (1995) *The Politics of Irish Education 1920 -1965*, Belfast, The Queen's University of Belfast, The Institute of Irish Studies.

Fielding, N. and Thomas, H. (2001) 'Qualitative interviewing', in Gilbert, N. (Ed.) *Researching Social Life*, London, Sage Publications, pp.124-144.

Flanagan, T. and Lambkin, B. (1993) 'Religious Identity and Integrated Education', in Moffat, C. (Ed.), *Education Together for a Change*, Belfast, Fortnight Educational Trust, pp. 195-204.

Fonow, M.M. and Cook, J.A. (1991*) Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship As Lived Research*, USA, Indiana University Press.

Fowler, F. J. (1995) *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation*, London, Sage.

Francis, L. J. and Grindle, Z. (2001) 'The changing ethos of Church schools: A survey of teacher attitudes in 1982 and 1996'. *Research in Education*, 65, pp.1-19.

Fraser, G. and Morgan, V. (1999) *In the Frame. Integrated Education in Northern Ireland: The implications of expansion*, Coleraine, Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster.

Freebody, P. (2003) *Qualitative Research in Education: Interaction and Practice*. London, Sage.

Furlong, C. and Monahan, L. (2000) *School Culture and Ethos: Cracking the code*, Dublin, Marion Institute of Education.

Gallagher, A. (1995) *Education in a Divided Society: A Review of research and policy*, Coleraine, Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster.

Gallagher, A. (2011). 'The community relations context', in Richardson, N. and Gallagher, T. (Eds.), *Rethinking Education Vol 1: Education for Diversity and Mutual Understanding*, Bern, Peter Lang.

Gardner, R., Cairns, J. and Lawton, D. (2006) *Faith Schools: Consensus or Conflict?* Routledge London.

Geertz, C. (1973) 'Thick descriptions: Towards an interpretive theory of culture', in Geertz, C. (Ed.) *The interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, pp.3-30.

Glover, D. and Coleman, M. (2005) 'School culture, climate and ethos: Interchangeable or distinctive concepts?', *Journal of In-service Education*, 31 (2), pp 251-272.

Godkin, J. (1862) *Education in Ireland*, Dublin, Alexander Thom.

Grace, G. (2002) *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality*, London, RoutledgeFalmer.

Grant, G. (1988) *The World we created at Hamilton High*. Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.

Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research', in Denzin, N.K. and Y. S. Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* London, Sage, (pp.105-117).

Guillemin, M. and Gillam, L. (2004) 'Ethics, reflexivity and ethically important moments', *Research Qualitative Inquiry,* 10, pp.261-280.

Halfpenny, P. (1979) 'The analysis of qualitative data', *Sociological Review*, 27(4), pp.799-825.

Hammersley, M. (1992) *What's wrong with Ethnography? Methodological explorations*, London, Routledge.

Hayes, B., McAllister, I. and Dowds, L. (2007) 'Integrated Education, intergroup relations and political identities in Northern Ireland, *Social problems*, 54(4), pp.454-482.

Hewstone, M., Cairns, E., Voci, A., Paolini, S., McLernon, F., Crisp, R. J. (2005) Intergroup contact in a divided society: Challenging segregation in Northern Ireland. In D. Abrams, J. M. Marques, & M. A. Hogg (Eds.), *The social psychology of inclusion and exclusion.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Hogan, P. (1984) 'The question of school ethos', *The Furrow*, 35(11), pp.693-704.

Hughes, J., and Donnelly, C. (2006) 'Contact as a policy mechanism for promoting better relations in integrated schools in Northern Ireland and bilingual/bi-national schools in Israel'. *Journal of Peace Education, 3*(1), pp.79-97.

Hughes, J. (2011) 'Are separate schools divisive? A case study from Northern Ireland', *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(5), pp.829-850.

Irwin, C. (1991) *Education and the Development of Social Integration in Divided Societies*, Belfast, Queens University Pub.

Johnston, L. (2001) *The Impact of Integrated Education on Students' Tolerance of Diversity: An ethnographic case study of Oakgrove Integrated College September – December 2000*, research report for NICIE, Belfast.

Johnston, M. (1994) 'Contrasts and similarities in case studies of teacher reflection and change', *Curriculum Inquiry,* 24(1), pp. 9-26.

Just, M. and Nilakanta, R. (2007) 'Frameworks for Qualitative Research', in Willis, J.W. (Eds.), *Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretative and Critical Approaches,*Thousand Oaks, Sage, pp. 147-180.

Kirk, J. and Miller, M.L. (1986) *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, London, Sage.

Kitzinger, J. (1994) 'The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants'. *Sociology of Health*, 16 (1), 103-121.

Kottak, C.P. (2007) *Window on Humanity: A concise introduction to Anthropology*. University of Michigan.

Lambkin, B. (1996) *Opposite Religions Still? Interpreting Northern Ireland after the conflict*. Aldershot: Avebury.

Lemon, E. (1993) 'The transformation process viewed from the staffroom', in Moffat, C. (Ed), *Education together for a Change*, Belfast, Fortnight Educational Trust, pp. 121-132.

Lichtman, M. (2013) *Qualitative Research in Education: A users guide* (3rd ed.) Los Angeles. Sage.

Lickona, T. (1991) *Educating for Character – how our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. New York, Bantam Books.

Liechty, J. and Clegg C. (2001) *Moving Beyond Sectarianism: Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland*. Blackrock, Dublin: Columba Press.

Lincoln Y, S. and Guba E,G. (1985) *Naturalistic Enquiry*, Beverley Hills, Sage.

Linehan, C. (2003) All Children Together : The struggle of Catholic parents to have their children educated with Protestant children in Northern Ireland, Unpublished MPhil dissertation, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College, Dublin.

Loughrey, D., Kidd, S. and Carlin, J. (2003) 'Integrated primary schools and community relations in Northern Ireland', *Irish Journal of Education*, 24, pp.30-46.

Macaulay, T. (2009) *Churches and Christian Ethos in Integrated Schools*, Belfast, Macaulay Associates.

Magee, J. (1970) 'The teaching of Irish history in Irish schools', *The Northern Teacher*, 10(1), pp.15-21.

Marques, J.M. and Hogg, M.A. (Eds.) (2004), *The Social Psychology of Inclusion and Exclusion,* Philadelphia, Psychology Press.

Marriott, S. (2001) *Polite Encounters: Integrated primary schools and community relations*, School of Education, University of Ulster.

Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*, London, Sage.

Mawhinney, B. (1999) *In the firing line: politics, faith, power and forgiveness* London Harper Collins.

McAleavy, G. Donegan, T. and O'Hagan, C. (2009) 'Visioning new modes of integrated and shared schools in Northern Ireland'. *European Journal of Education*, 44 (4), pp. 539-558.

McClenahan, C., Irwing, P., Stringer, M., Giles, M. and Wilson, R. (2003) 'Educational differences in self-perceptions of adolescents in Northern Ireland'. *International Journal of Behavioural Development*, (6), pp.513-518.

McEwen, A. (1999) *Public Policy in a Divided Society,* London, Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

McEwen, A., Salters, J. and Salters, M. (1993) *Integrated Education: The views of parents,* Belfast, Queens University.

McGlynn, C. (2003) 'Integrated education in Northern Ireland in the context of critical multi-culturalism', *Irish Educational Studies*, 22(3), pp.11-27.

McGlynn, C. (2004) 'Education for peace in integrated schools: A priority for Northern Ireland?' *Child Care in Practice*, 10(2), pp.85-94.

McGlynn, C. (2005) 'Integrated and faith-based schooling in Northern Ireland,' *Irish Journal of Education*, 36, pp.49-62.

McGlynn, C. (2007)' Rhetoric and reality: Are integrated schools in Northern Ireland really making a difference?' *Irish Educational Studies*, 26(3), pp.271-287.

McGlynn, C. (2008) 'Leading integrated schools: A study of the multicultural perspectives of Northern Irish principals'. *Journal of Peace Education, 5*(1), pp.3-16.

McGlynn, C. (2009) 'Integrating education: Parekhian multiculturalism and good practice'. *Intercultural Education*, 20(4), pp.299-310.

McGlynn, C. and Bekerman, Z. (2006) *The Challenges of initiatives for Catholic-Protestant and Palestinian-Jewish integrated education in Northern Ireland and Israel.* A paper presented to the Peace Education Special Interest Group of the American Research Association AGM in April, San Francisco.

McGlynn, C. and Bekerman, Z (2007) 'The management of pupil difference in Catholic-Protestant and Palestinian-Jewish integrated education in Northern Ireland and Israel', *Compare*, 37(5), pp 689-703.

McGlynn, C., Niens, U., Cairns, E and Hewstone, M. (2004) 'Moving out of conflict: the contribution of integrated schools in Northern Ireland to identity, attitudes, forgiveness and reconciliation', *Journal of Peace Education*, 1(2), pp.147-161.

McGonigle, J., Smith, A. and Gallagher, T. (2003), *The Challenge of Transformation*, UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster.

McGrath, M. (2000) *The Catholic Church and Catholic Schools in Northern Ireland,* Dublin, Irish Academic Press.

McLaughlin, T. (2005) 'The educative importance of ethos', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 53(3), pp.306 –325.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed). Newbury Park, CA. Sage.

Moffat, C. (1993) *Education Together for a Change*, Belfast, Fortnight Educational Trust.

Montgomery, A., Fraser, G., McGlynn, C., Smith, A. and Gallagher, *A. (2003) Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland: Integration in Practice*, UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster.

Murray, D. (1985) *Worlds Apart: Segregated Schools in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Appletree Press.

Murray, D. (2000) 'School ethos – The Northern Ireland experience', in Furlong, C. and Monahan, L. (Eds.) *School Culture and Ethos: Cracking the code*. Marion Institute of Education, Dublin, pp. 15-20.

Morgan, V., Fraser, G., Dunn. S., and Cairns, E. (1992) 'Parental Involvement in Education: how do parents want to become involved?' *Educational Studies*,18 (1), pp.11-30.

National Society for Promoting Religious Education. *Ethos*. (2008) http://www.natsoc.org.uk/schools/curriculum/ethos/ (Last accessed 3rd June 2010)

Nelson, J. (2008) 'Exploring diversity through ethos in initial teacher education'. *Teacher and Teacher Education* 24(7), pp.1729-1738.

Niens, U. and Cairns, E. (2005) 'Lessons learnt: Peace education'. *Theory into Practice*, 44(4), pp.337-344.

Nimmo, G., and Smith, D. (1995) *A path to self-efficacy in teaching: a longitudinal study of beginning teaching*. retrieved from http://www.aare.edu.au/95pap/nimmg95R097.txt (last accessed 21/11/2012)

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (1989) *Statement of Principles*. Belfast, NICIE.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (1994) *Annual report*, Belfast, NICIE.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (2001) *What's what in integration*, Belfast, NICIE.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education. (2009) *Annual report*, Belfast, NICIE.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (2010) *Statement of Principles*, Belfast, NICIE.

O'Buachalla, S. (1988) *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, Dublin, Wolfhound Press.

O Connor, F. (2002) *A Shared Childhood: The story of the integrated schools in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Blackstaff Press.

OFSTED (2007) *Trinity Academy Inspection Report* – Inspection number 317906. London, HMSO.

Ó hÓgartaigh, C. (2006) *Hedge schools and pre-professional accounting education in eighteenth century Ireland*, Paper presented at the world congress of accounting historians July, Dublin.
http://palissy.humana.univ-nantes.fr/msh/wcah/textes/ohogartaigh.pdf (Last accessed 19 August 2010)

Osborne, R., Cormack, R.J. and Miller, R.L. (1987) *Education and Policy in Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Policy Research Institute, QUB and University of Ulster.

Osborne, R. Cormack, R. and Gallagher. T. (1993) *After the Reforms: Education and Policy in Northern Ireland*, Aldershot, Avebury

Oxford English Dictionary, Online version,
http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/ethos (Last accessed 9, Sept 2009)

Pettigrew, T. F. (1998) 'Intergroup contact theory'. *Annual Review of Psychology, 49,* pp.65–85.

Pettigrew, T. F. and Tropp., L. R. (2000) 'Does intergroup contact reduce prejudice: Recent meta-analytic findings', in Oscamp, S. (Ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination: The Claremont symposium on applied social psychology*, Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 93-114.

Pike, M.A. (2010) 'Transaction and transformation at Trinity: Private sponsorship, core values and Christian ethos at England's most improved academy'. *Oxford Review of Education*, 36(6) pp.749-765.

Pike, M.A. (2011) 'Reading research on core values, Christian ethos and school transformation at England's most improved academy: A reply to Bragg'. *Oxford Review of Education*, 37(4), pp.561-565.

Platt, J. (1985) 'Weber's Verstehen and the history of qualitative research: The missing link', *The British Journal of sociology*, 36, pp.448-466.

Pollak, A. (1993) *A Citizens' Inquiry: The Opsahl Report on Northern Ireland*, Dublin, The Lilliput Press Ltd.

Prosser, J. (Ed.) (1999) *School Culture*, London, Paul Chapman.

Richardson, N. and Gallagher, T. (2011) *Rethinking Education Vol 1: Education for Diversity and Mutual Understanding*, Bern, Peter Lang.

Romero, E. J. and Cruthirds, K.W. (2006) *Academy of Management: Perspectives: The Use of Humor in the Workplace*. University of Texas.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston, J. and Smith, A. (1979) *Fifteen Thousand Hours, Secondary schools and their effects on children*, London, Open Books.

Scarlett, D. (1999) *The Church of Ireland and Separatist Education*. Belfast, Catalyst.

Silverman, D. (2004) *Qualitative Research: Theory, method and practice*, London, Sage.

Skelton, A. (1997) 'Studying hidden curricula: developing a perspective in the light of post-modern insight', *Curriculum Studies*, 5, pp.177-193.

Smith, A. (2001) 'Religious segregation and the emergence of integrated schools in Northern Ireland', *Oxford Review of Education*, 27(4), pp.559-575.

Smith, E. (2003) 'Ethos, Habitus and Situation for Learning: an ecology', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 24(4), pp.463-470.

Smith, W. J. K., Harrington, V. and Neck, C. P. (2000) 'Resolving conflict with humor in a diversity context', *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, (6), pp.606 – 625.

Smith J.K. and Heshusius, L. (1986) 'Closing down the conversation: the end of the qualitative-quantitative debate among educational enquirer', *Educational Researcher*, 15, pp.4-12.

Smith, A., and Robinson, A. (1996) *Education for Mutual Understanding: the initial statutory years*. University of Ulster, Centre for the Study of Conflict.

School Standards and Framework Act (1998)

Solvason, C. (2005) 'Investigating specialist school ethos ... or do you mean culture?' *Educational Studies*, 31(1), pp.85-94.

Spradley, J.P. (1979) *The Ethnographic Interview*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stake, R. E. (1995) *The Art of Case Study Research*, London, Sage.

Stringer, M., Irwing, P., Giles, M., McClenahan, C., Wilson, R. and Hunter, J. (2009) 'Intergroup contact, friendship quality and political attitudes in integrated and segregated schools in Northern Ireland'. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 79(2) pp.239-257.

Stringer, M., Irwing, P., Giles, M., McClenahan, C., Wilson, R. and Hunter, J. (2010) 'Parental and school effects on children's political attitudes in Northern Ireland'. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(2), pp.223-240.

Stolph, S. and Smith, S. (1995) *Transforming Culture: Stories, Symbols, Values and the Leader's Role*, Oregon, ClearingHouse on Educational Management University of Oregon.

Strivens, J. (1985) 'School climate: A review of a problematic concept, in D. Reynolds (Ed.), *Studying School Effectiveness* London, Falmer, pp.45-57.

Titley, E.B. (1983) *Church, State and the Control of Schooling in Ireland 1900-1944* , Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press.

Torrington, D. and Weighman, J. (1989) *The Reality of School Management,* Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Transferor Representatives' Council (1988) *Future Vision, Current concerns*, Belfast, TRC.

Transferor Representatives' Council (2005) *Ethos in Controlled Schools,* Belfast, TRC .

Vatican (1965) Declaration of Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis.* Statement proclaimed by Pope Paul VI. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (Last accessed 3 August 2010).

Vaughn, K., Schumm, J and Sunagub, J. (1996) 'Focus groups interviews – introduction', in Vaughn, K. Schumm, J. and Sunagub, J. *Focus Group interviews in Education and Psychology*. London, Sage.

Walford, G. (2005) 'Research Ethical Guidelines and Anonymity'. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 28(1), pp.83-93.

Veenman, S. (1984) 'Perceived problems of beginning teachers'. *Review of Educational Research*, 54(2), pp.143-178.

Webb, N. (2009) 'The Teacher's role in promoting collaborative dialogue in the classroom'. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 79, pp.1-28.

Whitehead, J. (2006) *What's in a name: Insights into what it means for a school in Northern Ireland to become integrated*. Paper presented to BAICE Conference at Queen's University Belfast in September.

Wicklow, C. (1997) Integrated education in Northern Ireland: The Lagan Experience , Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Glasgow.

Williams, K. (2000) 'Understanding ethos – a philosophical and literary exploration', in Furlong, C. and Monaghan, L. (Eds.) *School Culture and Ethos. Cracking the code*, Dublin, Marino Institute.

Wilson, D. and Dunn, S. (1989) *Integrated Schools: Information for Parents*, Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster.

Wright, F.(1991) Integrated Education and new beginnings in Northern Ireland, Working paper 6, Belfast, Corrymeela Press.

Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case Study Research, Design and Methods*, (4th edition), Beverley Hills, Sage.

Appendix 1: Questions for one-to-one with Principal

Preliminary.

- How long have you been involved with Integrated Education?

- What drew you into becoming involved with integrated education?

- How long have you been principal at this school?

- How do you understand and explain/unpack the term/concept of school ethos? *(Prompt - is it the same as culture, values etc? Is ethos fixed?)*

- How would you explain your school ethos to a prospective parent? *(Prompt.. Through the visual, through policies, procedures, practices etc)*

Integrated ethos

- What do you understand as defining a specifically integrated ethos – in other words, what sets it apart from a normal caring school ethos?

- How would you see this integrated ethos being mediated in your school? *(Prompt...Maybe illustrate by talking about how you might evidence this to a school inspector who is carrying out an ethos audit.....)*

- What do you see as your role as principal in developing and maintaining the school ethos? Do you see the primary role as, for example, as one of creating, developing, maintaining/sustaining the ethos?

- Can you give me any examples of how you do this as a part of your weekly work? E.g. how do you direct staff etc.....

- How do you measure the ethos (if at all) ...How do you test how the other staff members understand and mediate ethos to the parents and pupils?

- Where, in your view, do the Board come into this process of developing or stewarding ethos? How is this involvement evidenced?

- Where in your view do the staff come in? How is this role evidenced?

Christian ethos

- Integrated schools are "essentially Christian in character". What does this mean to you, in terms of the life, character and ethos of the school?

- Should this Christian element be essential part of an integrated ethos? If not, why not?

- How important is a Christian ethos as part of your school life?

- If it is important, how would this element be evidenced in your school?

- If it is not a significant part of your school ethos, how was this decision taken and why?

- How, if at all, in your view, can a Christian ethos deal with our increasingly multi cultural society?
- Have you any final comments on how an integrated ethos might be developed?

Appendix 2: Questions for one-to-one with Chair of Board

Preliminary.

- How long have you been involved with Integrated Education?

- What drew you into becoming involved with integrated education?

- How long have you been on the Board of this school?

- How do you understand and explain/unpack the term/concept of school ethos? *(Prompt - is it the same as culture, values etc? Is ethos fixed?)*

- How would you explain your school ethos to a prospective parent? *(Prompt.. Through the visual, through policies, procedures, practices etc)*

Integrated ethos

- What do you understand as defining a specifically integrated ethos – in other words, what sets it apart from a normal caring school ethos?

- How would you see this integrated ethos being mediated in your school? *(Prompt...Maybe illustrate by talking about how you might evidence this to a school inspector who is carrying out an ethos audit.....)*

- **Take this opportunity to reflect on first impressions of the site visit and observational audit of the school.**

- What do you see as your role as Chair and Board in developing and maintaining the school ethos? Do you see the primary role as, for example, as one of creating, developing, maintaining/sustaining the ethos?

- Can you give me any examples of how you do this as a part of your regular board meetings? E.g. is it ever on the agenda? etc.....

- How do you measure the ethos (if at all)

- How do you test how the staff members understand and mediate ethos to the parents and pupils?

Christian ethos

- Integrated schools are "essentially Christian in character". What does this mean to you, in terms of the life, character and ethos of the school?

- Should this Christian element be essential part of an integrated ethos? If not, why not?

- How important is a Christian ethos as part of your school life?

- If it is important, how would this element be evidenced in your school?

- If it is not a significant part of your school ethos, how was this decision taken and why?

- How, if at all, in your view, can a Christian ethos deal with our increasingly multi cultural society?

- Have you any final comments on how an integrated ethos might be developed?

Appendix 3: Questions for one-to-one with Board Members

Preliminary.

- How long have you been involved with Integrated Education?

- What drew you into becoming involved with integrated education?

- How long have you been on the Board of this school?

- How do you understand and explain/unpack the term/concept of school ethos? *(Prompt - is it the same as culture, values etc? Is ethos fixed?)*

- How would you explain your school ethos to a prospective parent? *(Prompt.. Through the visual, through policies, procedures, practices etc)*

Integrated ethos

- What do you understand as defining a specifically integrated ethos – in other words, what sets it apart from a normal caring school ethos?

- How would you see this integrated ethos being mediated in your school? *(Prompt...Maybe illustrate by talking about how you might evidence this to a school inspector who is carrying out an ethos audit.....)*

- **Take this opportunity to reflect on first impressions of the site visit and observational audit of the school.**

- What do you see as your role as a Board member in developing and maintaining the school ethos? Do you see the primary role as, for example, as one of creating, developing, maintaining/sustaining the ethos?
- Can you give me any examples of how you do this as a part of your regular board meetings? E.g. is it ever on the agenda? etc.....

- How do you measure the ethos (if at all)

- How do you test how the staff members understand and mediate ethos to the parents and pupils?

Christian ethos

- Integrated schools are "essentially Christian in character". What does this mean to you, in terms of the life, character and ethos of the school?

- Should this Christian element be essential part of an integrated ethos? If not, why not?

- How important is a Christian ethos as part of your school life?

- If it is important, how would this element be evidenced in your school?

- If it is not a significant part of your school ethos, how was this decision taken and why?

- How, if at all, in your view, can a Christian ethos deal with our increasingly multi cultural society?

- Have you any final comments on how an integrated ethos might be developed?

Appendix 4: Questions for one-to-one with Staff members

Preliminary.

- How long have you been involved with Integrated Education?

- What drew you into becoming involved with integrated education?

- How long have you been at this school?

- How do you understand and explain/unpack the term/concept of school ethos? *(Prompt - is it the same as culture, values etc? Is ethos fixed?)*

- How would you explain your school ethos to a prospective parent? *(Prompt.. Through the visual, through policies, procedures, practices etc)*

Integrated ethos

- What do you understand as defining a specifically integrated ethos – in other words, what sets it apart from a normal caring school ethos?

- How would you see this integrated ethos being mediated in your school? *(Prompt...Maybe illustrate by talking about how you might evidence this to a school inspector who is carrying out an ethos audit.....)*

- What do you see as your role as teacher/staff member in developing and maintaining the school ethos? Do you see the primary role as, for example, as one of creating, developing, maintaining/sustaining the ethos?

- Can you give me any examples of how you do this as a part of your weekly work? E.g. how do you work, relate etc.....

- How do you measure the ethos (if at all) ...How do you test how the other staff members understand and mediate ethos to the parents and pupils?

- Where, in your view, do the Board come into this process of developing or stewarding ethos? How is this involvement evidenced?

- Where in your view do staff come in? How is this role evidenced?

Christian ethos

- Integrated schools are "essentially Christian in character". What does this mean to you, in terms of the life, character and ethos of the school?

- Should this Christian element be essential part of an integrated ethos? If not, why not?

- How important is a Christian ethos as part of your school life?

- If it is important, how would this element be evidenced in your school?

- If it is not a significant part of your school ethos, how was this decision taken and why?

- How, if at all, in your view, can a Christian ethos deal with our increasingly multi cultural society?

- Have you any final comments on how an integrated ethos might be developed?

Appendix 5: Prompt for Observation audit: School visit

1. School "plant"

a) Approach to Entrance to school.

Signage – name, directions

b) School Frontage:

(promotion of Integrated ethos)

Signage, access,

c) Playground

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

Layout, signs/symbols

d) Entrance Hall and Reception

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

Wall displays (including children's work, photographs)

Pictures and symbols displayed

Media coverage and Quotations

General Signage,

Christian symbols

e) Principal's Office

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

Wall displays, pictures, symbols

Books and papers

f) Corridors

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

Wall displays

g) Classrooms/Library

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

Wall displays

Classroom layout – books, desks

h) Main Hall/Dining Hall

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

Layout

Wall displays, signs and symbols

i) General impression of school

(Promotion of Integrated and/or Christian nature of the school)

General approach to signs, symbols, wall displays, artwork, active promotion of Christian and/or integrated ethos.

Appendix 6: NICIE Statement of Principles 1989

We the representatives of the integrated schools and their supporting trusts, gathered together as members of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, define integrated education in the Northern Ireland context as

"Education together in school of pupils drawn in approximately equal numbers from the two major traditions with the aim of providing for them an effective education that gives equal recognition to and promotes equal expression of the two major traditions. The integrated school is essentially Christian in character, democratic and open in procedures and-promotes the worth and self-esteem of all individuals within the school community. The school as an institution seeks to develop mutual respect and consideration of other institutions within the educational community. Its core aim is to provide the child with a caring self-fulfilling educational experience which will enable him/her to become a fulfilled and caring adult."

WE AFFIRM

1. that parents have the basic rights in determining the nature of their children's education as set out in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education;

2. that Christianity and Humanism alike demand that children be brought up to respect those who differ from them in creed, culture, race or class;

3. that children being brought up to live as adults in a plural and divided society should be educated in a context where they will come to know, understand , respect and appreciate those who differ from them and to recognise what they hold in common as well as what divides them;

4. that children brought up in a plural and divided society should be nurtured in their parents' religious and national traditions and identity, while respecting the identity and appreciating the traditions of others;

5. that children should prepare to take responsibility for their lives as adults;

6. that children should be helped to develop self-confidence and self-respect so that they can develop confidence in and respect for others;

7. that children should learn to use and trust non-violent methods of resolving conflict;

8. that children should be encouraged and helped to be open in social relations despite difference in creed, culture, race, class, gender or ability; and

9. that children should be encouraged to identify with those less fortunate than themselves, the oppressed and victims of injustice.

In the development of integrated schools for Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland we are committed to the principles that we:

10. must seek to make them places where parents feel happy to send their children, where parents will feel secure knowing that the religious and cultural values and beliefs of their families will be respected in the school;

11. must ensure that they are founded with the consent of -the parents, recognising that separate school systems for Catholics, and Protestants are a basic right for ,families, parents and children who want them;

12. must ensure that there is opportunity for each child to be nurtured in his or her parents' religious and cultural traditions;

13. must seek to secure and sustain deep parental participation in the life and work of the school, and in particular in its government, in the formulation of its policy, in the creation of a working partnership with the teaching staff, and the promotion of good relations with the local community;

14. must plan the schools so that their integrated character is protected from the natural segregative tendencies of a divided society;

15. must ensure that each integrated school community welcomes, respects and cherishes the children of parents having other or no religious convictions while remaining loyal to its own essentially Christian character;

16. must ensure that the integrated school is open in its relationships with Catholic and Protestant schools and with the local community.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

In applying the above principles the governors, staff and parents of all integrated schools-in Northern Ireland must make every effort to implement the following guidelines.

EQUALITY

There shall be equality of status within the schools for the two main ethno-religious communities of Northern Ireland.

There shall be equality of respect and treatment for all children, regardless of creed, culture, race, class, gender or ability.

These commitments to equality shall he fostered both structurally within the Board of Governors, the staff and the pupils and culturally within the overt and hidden curriculum of the school. To achieve these ends all reasonable steps shall be taken to ensure that:

(a) at least 40% of the first year intake in any year are pupils of the Catholic tradition and at least 40% of pupils are of the Protestant tradition;

(b) at least 40% of the teaching staff are of the Catholic tradition and at least 40% of the Protestant tradition;

(c) at least 40% of the governors are of the Catholic tradition and at least 40% of the Protestant tradition;

(d) the Catholic and Protestant communities within the schools are accorded equal respect and standing;

and furthermore to:

(c) promote the learning of shared culture, beliefs and traditions;

(f) promote the learning of what is specific to the other tradition;

(g) nurture within each pupil what is specific to his or her own tradition;

(h) promote an atmosphere in which pupils will neither conceal or flaunt their own cultural identities;

(i) ensure that; do symbol likely to be seen as offensive or divisive shall be displayed in the school premises or worn by pupils;

(j) ensure that when inviting well-known visitors to the school they are selected even-handedly, having regard to the perceptions of the two major communities within Northern Ireland;

(k) be democratic in all relationships between staff, parents and governors and, where possible, make decisions affection. school life on a consensual basis.

RELIGION

The school shall provide a Christian rather than a secular approach and context.

(a) The children shall learn together all that we can reasonably expect them to learn together.

(b) Where the school population includes significant numbers of children of a particular religious community, separate provision should be made to prepare such children for sacramental and liturgical participation in that specific religious community if their parents so wish. In addition the school shall encourage ministers of such religious communities to visit the school, take a pastoral interest in the children and get to know the parents and teachers.

(c) In a manner appropriate to their age and ability, pupils shall be introduced to the ideas, beliefs and practices of the major world religions and humanist philosophies.

(d) All parents should be encouraged to allow their children to follow the common elements in the religious curriculum

(e) Where parents do not wish their children to be given any specific sacramental or liturgical preparation their wishes shall be respected and proper alternative provision shall be made for their children.

(f) In the selection of prayers, texts (c), the text of the Lord's Prayer), readings and music for school assemblies and gatherings, care shall be taken to ensure equal prominence for the two major traditions and fair representation of other groups of significant size within the school community.

(g) Where there are significant differences in liturgical practice between the two major communities (e.g. in the making of the sign of the cross) children should be encouraged to continue with their normal practice.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The school shall promote and encourage parental involvement at all levels of school life.

(a) There shall be Parents' Council to mobilise and organise parental support and participation and to advise the Board of Governors of matters of concern to the parents.

(b) The Governors shall consult the Parents' Council when drafting or redrafting their statements of curriculum policy and discipline policy.

(c) The Governors shall ensure that the parents are briefed when. major changes in the curriculum take place.

(d) The Governors shall consult the Parents' Council before determining the school calendar, start and end times of the school day, school uniform, homework policy and other such matters of evident import to parents.

(e) The Governors shall establish appropriate arrangements and procedures for individual and collective communication between parents and

(i) the principal,
(ii) other members of the teaching staff,
(iii) the Governors themselves.

(f) The Governors shall take steps to ensure that parents understand their obligations to play a full part in school life, for example:

(i) by regular attendance at school functions, meetings and events;
(ii) by helping during the school day;
(iii) by helping on school outings and at school events;
(iv) by taking an active interest in their children's schoolwork and homework;
(v) by encouraging their children to show respect for parents, teachers and other pupils by their manner and in their care for their appearance;
(vi) by seeing that their children attend school regularly and punctually;
by taking part in fund-raising activities for the school

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

(a) The school shall wherever possible be coeducational and all-ability in character and shall seek to educate each child according to his or her educational needs.

(b) Resources and teaching strategies shall be organised to accommodate the all-ability nature of the school. In particular the school shall provide special help:

(i) for children with particular learning difficulties; and
(ii) for children at the top of the ability range.

(c) The school curriculum shall reflect not only the external demands of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, the inspectorate and the economy but also the all-ability-character and integrative purpose of the school itself. In particular the school shall make provision for:

(i) a history syllabus which reflects the historical roots of the two major communities within Northern Ireland so as to illuminate both their separate and shared history;

(ii) music and dancing which reflect the culture of both major traditions;

and, on an optional basis, for

(iii) Irish language;
(iv) Irish games.

(d) In selecting texts for English language, literature and drama, care shall be taken to illustrate the contributions both of writers born in Britain and those born in Ireland, North and South.

The school curriculum and the manner in which it is delivered shall encourage the development of autonomous individuals with the capacity to think, question and research.

Appendix 7: Statement of Principles 2010

Declaration of Ethos

The integrated school provides a learning environment where children and young people from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds, as well as those of other faiths and none, can learn with, from and about each other. The promotion of equality and good relations extends to everyone in the school and to their families regardless of their religious, cultural or social background.

Integrated education is value-driven and child-centred. It is delivered through a holistic approach with an emphasis on developing every aspect of a child's or young person's potential

Context

The history of Northern Ireland is one marked by prejudice and intolerance. It is a society divided politically, religiously, culturally and economically, where ignorance of those who are different has led to sectarian violence and strife. The current Peace Process reminds us that change is possible through dialogue and negotiation. At the same time the influx of newcomers from other parts of the world brings with it the challenge of enhanced ethnic diversity, demonstrating that Northern Ireland cannot afford to remain isolated and trapped in time. The 21st century therefore brings hope for the future, despite being burdened by the legacy of the past. Communities now find themselves in transition, feeling their way cautiously towards equality and sharing but still troubled by old loyalties and beliefs. At the core of their journey lies the need to create shared spaces

where all have the opportunity to live, learn and grow together in understanding, rather than mistrust. For over 25 years, integrated schools have sought to influence societal change and promote greater choice for parents. Thousands of young people have shared in the unique experience that is Integrated Education, but many thousands more have never had the opportunity to meet, or make friends with, someone of a different faith or tradition. In 1991 when the

Statement of Principles was first written, Northern Ireland was a very different place to what it is today, although the common thread of sectarianism connects

that past with this present. The revised Statement of Principles reflects an integrated movement that is still dealing with the country's internal divisions, while at the same time witnessing greater ethnic diversity and an increased reluctance for people to categorise themselves as being from a particular religious background. It is in this context that the Statement of Principles reaffirms the meaning of Integrated Education and articulates the integrated ethos.

Definition

In the spirit of promoting a better and shared future, the friends and supporters of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education define Integrated

Education in the Northern Ireland context as:

'Education together in a school of children and young people drawn mainly from the Protestant and Catholic traditions, with the aim of providing for them an excellent education that gives recognition to and promotes the expression of these two main traditions.

The integrated school, while essentially Christian in character, welcomes those of all faiths and none, and seeks to promote the worth and self-esteem of pupils, parents, staff, governors and all who are affected by the presence of the school in the community. The core aim is to provide children and young people with a caring and enhanced educational experience thus empowering them as individuals to affect positive change in a shared society.'

Affirmations

1. Parents, together with their children, have rights in determining the nature of each child's education as set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (Human Rights Act, 1998) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
2. Children and young people of all religious, social and cultural backgrounds, regardless of ability, race, gender or sexual orientation have a right to an education which respects and gives expression to their individual identities, while providing opportunities for them to explore the diversity of the world in which they live.
3. In an inherently segregated and contested society, children and young people can learn to respect difference more effectively when they are afforded the opportunity to have meaningful and sustained engagement with those who are different from themselves.
4. Young people should be encouraged to recognise those less fortunate than themselves, the oppressed and victims of injustice.

Core Principles of Integrated Education

The 4 core principles of Integrated Education represent the cornerstones of the integrated ethos. The integrated school demonstrates its distinctiveness and vision through a commitment to these principles.

(i) Equality

The integrated school promotes equality in sharing between and within the diverse groups that compose the school community. This occurs structurally at every level amongst pupils, staff and the board of governors, as well as culturally within the overt and hidden curricula of the school. To achieve these ends each integrated school aspires to the following:

(a) an annual intake of at least 40% pupils from a perceived Catholic background and at least 40% pupils from a perceived Protestant background;
(b) a board of governors comprising at least 40% members from a perceived Catholic background and 40% from a perceived Protestant background; and
(c) the active recruitment of teachers whose cultural or traditional background reflects that of existing or potential pupils.

Furthermore the integrated school subscribes to:

(d) maintaining high academic and vocational standards within an all-ability framework and providing equal access to the curriculum for all its pupils;
(e) supporting the personal and professional development of all members of staff, with particular emphasis on enhancing the integrated learning experience of each pupil;
(f) ensuring that all policies developed by the school reflect and respect the diversity within the school community; and
(g) taking a democratic approach to all relationships between pupils, staff, parents and governors

(ii) Faith and Values

The integrated school provides a Christian based rather than a secular approach. It aspires to create an environment where those of all faiths and none are respected, acknowledged and accepted as valued members of the school community.

In this context:

(a) pupils will learn together all that can reasonably be expected for them to learn together;
(b) the school will facilitate specific provision, where necessary, for Catholic pupils whose parents wish them to undergo sacramental preparation. It will also seek to acknowledge significant religious and cultural celebrations which are representative of other faiths;

(c) the school will encourage religious and community leaders to visit and participate in school activities;
(d) pupils will be introduced to the ideas, beliefs and practices of the major world religions and humanist philosophies, in a manner appropriate to their age and ability, and in line with the NI curriculum; and
(e) alternative provision will be made for those pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in any religious activities or classes.

(iii) Parental Involvement
The support and commitment of parents is a fundamental element of Integrated Education and historically, parents have been central to the development of integrated schools. The integrated school therefore seeks to encourage and sustain effective parental involvement in the life and work of the school by:
(a) maintaining significant levels of parental representation on the board of governors (i.e. in accordance with legislative requirements and structures);
(b) creating a forum for parents which cultivates and focuses parental support for the school;
(c) establishing appropriate arrangements and procedures for individual and collective communication between parents and:
(i) the principal
(ii) other members of teaching staff
(iii)the governing body; and
(d) ensuring that parents are made fully aware of the school's integrated ethos.

(iv) Social Responsibility
The integrated school delivers the curriculum on an all-ability and inclusive basis to all of its pupils. It respects the uniqueness of every pupil and acknowledges his/her entitlement to personal, social, intellectual and spiritual development in the attainment of individual potential. This philosophy affirms that pupils should be encouraged to:
(a) understand and engage with the use of non-violent means of conflict resolution;
(b) demonstrate mutual respect and understanding towards others, and develop tolerance and trust of those who are different;
(c) nurture self-confidence and self-respect; and
(d) appreciate the interdependence between society and the natural environment it inhabits.
Furthermore, the integrated school:
(e) will deliver the curriculum in a way that reflects its particular ethos.
Where possible, the subjects and activities offered, and the resources complementing their delivery, should reflect the diversity within the school's own pupil population;
(f) has a duty to be open in its relationships with schools, learning partnerships, churches and other local institutions;
(g) should present itself to the wider community as a shared civic space.